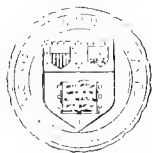


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A NOVEL

BY

ÉLIZABETH E. EVANS

*Author of "The Story of Louis XVII.," "Kaspar
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It was “like a story,” coming in, as I did this afternoon, just at the hour when the people were taking their afternoon coffee.

Before me was a large, old-fashioned, yellow house, standing in a shady garden, surrounded by high walls, with tall green gates opening on the street. There were three little arbours in sight from the gate, each one filled with a group of ladies, sitting with their cups in front of them upon the round tables, and farther off, in the shrubbery, I could catch glimpses of children in white dresses, flitting to and fro. The house is full, and I came just in time to secure the last room, a corner chamber in the third storey, with windows south and east, and a beautiful view in both directions. My bed, prettily draped with white dimity, stands in a deep alcove, and curtains of flowered chintz shut off the alcove from the chamber. The sofa and chairs are covered with faded green silk, there is a tall bureau with a swinging mirror, and a

spindle-legged table, and a bookcase with glass doors. It is all neat and quaint and, best of all, foreign-looking.

A great bell, apparently hung in a turret above the house, summoned the household to supper. The dining-room is very large, with a low ceiling and dark-coloured walls, and deep window seats furnished with crimson cushions. Glass doors open into an enclosed court communicating with the garden; across the court is the kitchen, and neat maidservants in white caps and white aprons patter to and fro upon the tiled floor.

This charming place begins to seem homelike. The weather is delightful. One is tempted to sit up all night to watch the moonlight on the lake, and to rise at dawn to enjoy the freshness of the garden. The windows of the court are blue with morning-glory blossoms, and the ground below is ablaze with nasturtium and portulaca.

Most of the boarders are late risers and take their coffee in their bedroom; but a French lady is one of the first to make her appearance, and after breakfast she establishes herself for the forenoon in an easy-chair placed in the shady side of the glass-covered court. She is a Parisian, recently married to a Marseilles merchant, who is coming in a few days to escort her home. She is expecting soon an increase to her family, and makes no secret of her happiness in view of the approaching event. She talks about her prospects to every one who will listen to her, and nobody seems in the least shocked at her freedom of speech. She is devotedly attached to her husband, and can scarcely wait for the time to come which shall end their six weeks' separation. There is something so primitive in her absorption, her wife-and-mother-love is so strong and firm, that it seems more animal instinct than developed passion. There she sits, robed in a loose white wrapper, her delicately slippered feet resting upon an embroidered footstool, and a basket of little lace caps and other

items of an infants' wardrobe at her side, awaiting their final decoration from her tasteful fingers. She spends the greater part of the day in the same place and at the same occupation. She will not go out to drive, for fear that the horse might run away or otherwise frighten her ; she will not go out to walk, for fear of being tired ; what little exercise she ventures upon is taken at occasional intervals in the shady garden paths, where she apologises to every one she meets for her *dishabille* and her laziness, on the score of her interesting situation.

To an American, educated into the idea that the typical French woman is a faithless wife and a careless mother, such a character is a revelation. She is probably an exaggerated specimen ; but the fact that nobody seems disposed to be shocked, or to laugh at her, implies a different standard of feeling upon certain social questions from what obtains among us and from what we imagine obtains among Europeans. Her delighted acquiescence in the conditions of maternity would be altogether pleasing, were it not for the combined severity and indifference displayed by her towards her little step-son. She is a second wife, and the only child of her predecessor is under her charge, or, rather, under the charge of his nurse ; for the stepmother sees as little of him as possible, and is very impatient with him when he is in her presence. He is a pretty little boy, who, one would suppose, might appeal strongly for a present outpouring of her abundant prospective mother-love ; but her heart is evidently shut against him, and it is easy to foresee the injustice which is to disturb the family happiness by-and-bye.

The upper end of the long dining-table is occupied by a Russian family named Domanoff, consisting of a mother with three daughters and one son and their governess, an Englishwoman, who has lived so long in Russia as to have nothing English about her excepting the language. The son is the youngest of the children, and is idolised by the whole family, for no perceptible reason, beyond the fact that he is a boy and not a girl. He runs

about in picturesque costumes, and on Sunday marches beside his mother to the Greek Church in a silk robe with wide open sleeves and a fringed crimson sash. The eldest daughter is a large, finely-developed girl, with bright eyes and a good-natured expression. She laughs a great deal, although her teeth are horrible. Her jewelry is exquisite. Malachite and opal are well represented, of course, and on one of her plump fingers she wears a forget-me-not ring with a tiny diamond dew-drop depending from an almost invisible chain. This young lady seems to rival her brother in the mother's affection, and she in her turn is very fond of her youngest sister, who resembles her strongly; but the whole family appear to dislike the second daughter, a dark-eyed, sallow-faced girl with heavy brows and angular shoulders, who, nevertheless, may in a few years develop into the handsomest woman of them all. She looks oppressed and downcast. If the general dislike is in consequence of evil temper on her part, it is enough to confirm her in wickedness to be treated so unkindly; if, as is more probable, the others combine against her out of caprice, or lack of appreciation of her peculiar qualities, it is a great wrong which may affect her whole life disastrously.

Coming through the garden this afternoon I was struck by the charmingly foreign look of the place. I have been so long abroad that everything appears natural to me now; but once in a while I see what is before me with the fresh impressions which kept me in a trance of delight during my first wanderings in Europe.

How I wish I knew the history of all the people who have lived in this old house! They say it was originally a convent, a summer retreat for the nuns belonging to a large establishment in the city. But that was long ago. At the time of the Reformation the order was expelled, and the building, after standing empty a good while, was altered over into a villa for a noble family now no longer existing, at least in this region. For about fifty years past it has served as a house of entertainment, first, as a country hotel and afterwards as a Pension. Its beautiful situation has always ensured

for it a considerable degree of custom, and it is conveniently near to the city, especially now that an omnibus runs back and forth every half hour.

The garden is old-fashioned and very pleasant. It was evidently once well cared for, and there is still a great variety of choice shrubbery. The trees are trimmed to form a roof of shade over the terrace, and under every clump of bushes is a cosy seat ; while the open sunny lawn is adorned with flower-beds, and the broad piazza is festooned with a tangle of wild ivy, clematis and honeysuckle, which completely hide the pillars and lie in graceful masses upon the roof. There is an arbour upon a slight elevation in the east corner of the garden, and from thence a winding path leads down through a thicket of fir-trees to the shore of the lake (or pond, as we should call it in America), a small and lonely sheet of water, with the hills standing so near that a good part of the surface is generally in shadow, while the opposite shore is very rocky, so that the land is not cultivated, and the woods are allowed to grow down to the water's edge. A few fishermen are usually to be seen hovering about in ugly scows, securing fish for the city market, and a man in the village keeps boats to let to city people ; but the lake is very apt to be rough, and is therefore not much frequented by pleasure seekers. The water is too cold for bathing, excepting in the height of summer, and as there is no bath-house on our premises, I presume the guests do not often make use of the rather hazardous opportunity.

A French gentleman, arrived to-day, a middle-aged man, dressed in the extreme of fashion, and speaking his native language with a preciseness of tone and exquisiteness of pronunciation rather oppressive to those of us who can never hope to arrive at such linguistic perfection. He seems to be very much struck with the eldest Russian girl ; several times during dinner he exclaimed, "*Oh, what eyes !*" as he stared at the young lady, who must have heard his remark, and could scarcely fail to perceive his admiration.

The Marseilles husband came for his wife yesterday, and this morning the family departed. Probably I shall never see any of them again ; but I would like to know their future fate, especially that of the two children, so sure to be rivals, and equally certain of receiving a wrong bias in their home training.

Most of the strangers I met on my arrival have gone away, but their places are rapidly being filled by new-comers. Opposite me at table is a Russian family, a sandy-haired, red-faced officer, with a delicate-looking wife and a merry little girl. The seats next mine are occupied by a Polish gentleman and his daughter ; the man reserved and melancholy, the daughter not beautiful but exceedingly attractive, with large dark eyes, a soft voice, and manners the perfection of innocent grace. Her mother does not come to the table, on account of a painful disease of the eyes, which threatens blindness, and has already greatly impaired the poor lady's sight. A Danish family also made their appearance to-day, an elderly couple and two young people, probably their children, daughter and son.

There is a small house adjoining the Pension and also opening into the garden, which is used as a lodging-house when the main building overflows. When I first came there was only one occupant, a German count, who chose to room there, because he wished to be as quiet as possible on account of his health. But now the rest of the house is taken by an American family, an old lady with a widowed daughter and two grand-daughters, apparently very pleasant people, with the frank and yet self-respecting manners so characteristic of unspoiled children of the great Republic. I can look down from my window upon their balcony, where they spend most of their time. It is covered with an awning, and the grandmother has a comfortable chair in the shadiest corner. An upright piano has been sent out from the city, and the elder daughter, a pretty girl about sixteen years old, practices a good deal. She plays well ; but I doubt whether the invalid count enjoys so much music.

Many persons object to a boarding-house on account of the

gossip. And I don't wonder ! It is astonishing how soon the private history of each individual becomes known, or guessed at, by all the other inmates. I am sure I never ask indiscreet questions, but somehow information comes to me about everybody I meet.

I heard a long story to-day about the Polish countess. They say she was exiled for having conspired against the Russian Government, and came very near meeting with a worse fate. The property was confiscated, and now the family are wandering about, subsisting upon what money and jewels they were able to bring away with them. The young lady wears a curious watch-chain in the form of prison fetters ; she told somebody who was noticing it that it represented the enslavement of her native land, and she should never leave off wearing it until Poland was free. I am afraid she will never have another watch-chain, if she waits for that event !

The Danish count is crazy, and his family are in constant anxiety about his doings. He has been in an asylum for more than a year, and was recently discharged as cured. Travelling was recommended for him, but he is too much excited by the constant variety, and his former melancholy is changing into dangerous restlessness. This is his birthday, and the family celebrated the anniversary by an afternoon coffee-party on the garden terrace, to which we were all invited. We went, and tried to be as gay as possible, but I am sure we were all very sad in our hearts. The poor man looked extremely wild, and said and did a great many foolish things, and his wife's face was haggard with care. The young lady is her daughter, and is married, but the young officer is not her husband. He is her cousin, and is also married. They came away from Denmark on the old gentleman's account, and the husband of the one and the wife of the other were obliged to remain at home. That is all natural and right ; but the people in the house have started a silly story to the effect that the young people are in love with each other and are discontented with their

lawful mates, and have taken this means to enjoy each other's company. It is a slander, I am sure. I watched them this afternoon, and there was nothing but the most innocent, cousinly freedom of manner in their intercourse.

I no longer wonder that people have turned hermits. When I think how we meddle with and misunderstand each other, I wonder we are not all hermits!

They say that the story about the Polish countess is not true after all. There is no such romantic reason for the arrival of the family in a foreign land. The latest version is that she is out of health, and imagines or realises that the home climate does not agree with her, and so compels her husband and daughter to travel, although they would greatly prefer remaining on their estate. It is true, however, that the count seems very anxious whenever his wife comes in contact with any of the boarders in the garden. She appears to have very free opinions and to be quite ready to air them on all occasions, and several times I have seen her husband's little sharp eyes looking out from behind a bush while the countess was sitting on a bench close by, talking politics with the French gentleman and the Russian lady.

The new Russian lady, Madame Noffsky, sits next to the French gentleman at dinner, and they are very good friends. He says "*she has ideas*," which seems to be the highest praise he can bestow upon a fellow-mortal. He is always talking about "*ideas*," and blaming one person for not having any, and praising another for owning a good stock of that intangible commodity. His name is Monsieur Laufait, and he lives in Paris, as one might guess from his attire and manner. He is married, and his wife is coming soon. She is an Englishwoman, and I imagine he is not very fond of her, for he told Madame Noffsky the other day that he had just received a letter from his wife, and that she was in

the Swiss mountains with a party of friends, and perhaps it would be his good luck to lose her over a precipice !

I never shall like him again ; for if he was in sport, there is no wit in such a remark, and if he was in earnest, it is too horrible !

Another French gentleman made his appearance to-day at dinner. He has come all the way from Paris to meet the Danish family. He happened to sit near me in the parlour after tea, and he spoke of his long friendship with the count, and told what a noble man and distinguished officer he had been before this misfortune came upon him. Later in the evening, I saw him conversing with Miss Olga, the unloved one of the Domanoff family. She happened to be separated from her kindred just then, but they soon perceived that she was enjoying a pleasure in which they had no share, and so the mother and the governess put their heads together and whispered, and presently Olga was called over to their side of the room and told sharply to entertain herself with her sisters. The Frenchman is middle-aged, of very quiet manners, and wears the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour in his buttonhole ; one would suppose he might be trusted to exchange a few words with a half-grown girl unrebuked. He did not seem to notice that anything unpleasant had happened, and I soon saw him playing whist, with Madame Noffsky for a partner. She was more graceful than ever, and exceedingly animated. The presence of the stranger appeared to rouse all her powers of social fascination, and she evidently did her very best the whole evening. I watched her with interest, for I heard her story this morning. It is rather tragical ; but after seeing her efforts to make herself agreeable to a perfect stranger this evening, I concluded that she would "live through it." She told me herself, and I have been feeling very sorrowful about her all day. She belongs to a noble and wealthy family of Moscow, and, as is frequently the case in such families, was married almost as soon as she left school, to a man whom she knew very slightly, and for whom she had not a particle of affection. Fortunately, he pos-

sessed a character which she could esteem, and he was passionately fond of her from the outset, and has always "carried her on his hands," as they say over here. Perhaps in time his devotion might have awakened an answering sentiment in her heart had she not met with a man who seemed the one of all others exactly suited to her temperament and taste. He was the brother of her most intimate school friend, and she was therefore often in his society. His attachment for her was as strong as hers for him, and a domestic tragedy seemed imminent, when the husband, recognising the danger, proposed to his wife that she should spend a year with him in foreign travel, after which time, if her feelings should remain unchanged, he would allow her to procure a divorce and marry the man of her choice; although, in that case, he should insist upon retaining possession of their only child. They have now been about six months from home, have visited Switzerland and Italy, and spent some time in Paris, where the wise husband gave the dissatisfied wife *carte blanche* as regards milliners and dressmakers, the result being that she displays a very elegant wardrobe, and is by many degrees more contented than she would otherwise be. I am inclined to think that the husband will win after all. She asked me what I thought about the matter, and I said, "Stay with your child; that is your manifest duty. Perhaps in doing what you know is right with respect to her, all the rest will come right too. You may learn to love your husband, or you may find that you do not love the other man as much as you now think you do. At any rate, you may be sure that if you desert your child, your conscience will trouble you, and you cannot be happy under any circumstances."

Mons. Laufait's wife has arrived, a tall, bony woman, "thoroughly English," with thin, sandy hair, watery blue eyes, a sharp, red-tipped nose and projecting teeth.

It is doubtless just as I supposed it was. She is rich, and he has married her for the money. She is probably worth ten of him in character also, but he will never appreciate that. She is

evidently very fond of him, and he is quite as perceptibly ashamed of her, that is, of her personal appearance, which, it must be confessed, is not up to the standard of French taste. She is dowdy in her dress and eccentric in her manners, and although she speaks French fluently it is with an accent, which makes Mons. Laufait wince at every sentence. Nevertheless there seems to be something substantial and true about her which is wanting to her elegant husband's make-up.

There is great excitement in our landlady's family at present. She is a widow, and carries on the establishment with the help of her unmarried sister, a demure-looking woman, over thirty years old, I should say. The widow has one child, a son, about eighteen years of age, and this youth has taken it into his head to fall desperately in love with his aunt ! Scolding and laughing at him do no good ; he even threatens to take his life if his aunt will not consent to marry him. The family lawyer came out from Schneckenberg yesterday to attend to the matter. He advised Frau Wartheim to send her son away from home at once and keep him away until he has outgrown this folly. So to-morrow he is to be packed off to some institute in a distant part of the country. I was speaking to-day of the incident as the most preposterous thing I ever heard of ; but Madame Noffsky quietly informed me that she knew of a good many marriages within the same degree of relationship. It seems that one of the finest houses in Schneckenberg is owned and occupied by a man who married his niece. It is generally rich people who indulge in such a union, and a special dispensation from the Government is necessary to make the ceremony legal. Of course the holding together of property is the principal motive. If such marriages were unheard of in Europe, as with us, young Wartheim would never have thought of falling in love with his elderly aunt.

Madame Noffsky and Mdlle. Olga Domanoff have struck up

quite an intimacy. The poor girl looks brighter and better for the attention. She probably unburdens her mind to this new friend. I only hope that Madame Noffsky will not return the confidence by telling her own romance. I am sorry she told me. I feel guilty every time her husband looks at me. So long as man and wife live together, their mutual relations ought to be kept in the strictest confidence. And yet how many women, even among those who consider themselves happily married, are in the habit of telling all their domestic affairs to some *confidante*, the husband, no doubt, having an instinctive consciousness that his wife and her friend are sitting in judgment upon his ways! Herein, too, lies the deep-rooted and widespread prejudice against the typical mother-in-law.

I often think of what Harry Newman said when he married Nelly Windiate: "*I am thankful that my wife has no religion and no relations.*" Poor Harry! His views of religion were rather low, in consequence of his having been cheated out of what little property he had by a very pious uncle, and he had seen enough of family quarrels in the course of his roving experience to be glad to have pretty Nelly all to himself. And their married life is very happy.

Young Wartheim has been quietly sent away to school, and his aunt goes about the house as demure as ever. A great many events which sound very romantic in the telling are commonplace enough to the actors in them.

The German count has been ill again, a threatened return of the fever from which he has only lately recovered. The American family have been devoted to him, and now that he is able to be around, he is with them almost all the time. The piano, which was silent during his illness, is again melodious, and the invalid count reclines in grandmother's easy-chair upon the shady balcony, while the young lady plays. Of course there is plenty of gossip

in this house about our neighbours, the general verdict being that the Americans are trying to secure a foreign title to add new glory to their Republican wealth. Count Markstein, it seems, belongs to one of the oldest and grandest families in North Germany, and has riches in accordance with his rank.

But I am sure that these Americans are entirely single-minded in their attentions to the young man. They do not even know that he is a nobleman ; they think his name is Graf. But I do not tell this in their defence, as they would only be laughed at for their ignorance. And their ignorance consists in not being conversant with foreign languages ; they are well-informed as regards their mother tongue. The grandmother told me yesterday that they should go away very soon. They would have gone before, she said, if poor " Mr. Graf " had not been so ill ; they could not find it in their hearts to leave him when he was so nervous and lonesome !

The Americans went away to-day. They have had but little intercourse with the other boarders, on account of their inability to speak French or German, and the strangers have looked rather askance at them, because they were supposed to be making a dead set at the count. I am glad they departed in blissful ignorance of the low estimation in which they were held. The young girl got into the carriage, carrying in her hand a beautiful bouquet which the count gave her at parting, and the grandmother called out to him as they drove off :

" Now don't forget to come and see us if you ever visit America ! "

" They are the best people I ever met ! " the count said to me, as we turned back from the gate together. His eyes were full of tears as he spoke. And there were all the boarders at the open windows and on the balconies, watching the departure and waving their handkerchiefs in farewell, while their hearts were running over with scorn and malice. What a world this is !

The Pension has been unusually quiet for a week past. Some of our company have gone away on excursions, others have left for good. "For good," I hope it is with the Noffskys. Madame Noffsky seemed more tranquil and domestic the latter part of the time. The only thing I did not like was the fact of her receiving and sending letters in a secret manner. We went into Schneckenberg several times together, and I noticed that she carried letters with her to mail in the General Office, and inquired for letters at the *poste restante*. Once she got one in that way. I believe she went to the city entirely on account of the post-office, although she pretended to be in great distress to do some shopping.

Still I have strong hopes that she will not allow this temptation to lead her away from the path of her plain duty. Her husband appeared to try to console himself during the interval of suspense with French novels, perhaps with a view to supplementing his deficiencies in the French language, of which he makes rather awkward work, while his wife speaks it to perfection. I am sure there cannot be much comfort for a jealous husband in the general outcome of French novels! He is devoted to his little daughter, and spends a part of every forenoon teaching her to read Russian. She is an interesting little creature, piquant and pretty, and as graceful as a fairy. I enjoyed seeing her curtsy to the company when she came into the dining-room to dinner. The day before they left the whole family drove to Schneckenberg in a grand carriage, to call upon some high and mighty Russians staying at a hotel there. Madame Noffsky was attired in a magnificent black *gros grain* Paris costume with long train, and hat with sweeping feathers. I never saw a more beautiful silk, it had a bloom on it like an egg plum! The child was dressed like a little doll, and General Noffsky wore an ample cloak of the finest broadcloth over his uniform. Anybody seeing them driving along in such state and splendour would have taken them for a model of a happy and prosperous family. And yet what a conflict must be going on in that poor woman's heart! What doubt and anxiety must fill her husband's mind! How great are the evils which threaten the unconscious child!

Madame Noffsky promised to write and let me know her future decision ; but I dare not hope she will remember her promise. Russia seems too far away, and she is going to travel several months longer before going home.

The Polish family have had a visit from a distant relation, a young priest, attired in a long black robe, and with the tonsure making a white circle in the midst of his dark locks. His coming seemed a god-send to the young lady. I never saw her so animated before, nor heard her laugh so merrily.

The two young people spent hours at the piano in the public parlour, playing duets and singing. It seems they were brought up together, and have not met before for several years. I could not help wishing he was not a priest, they seemed to harmonise so thoroughly, and she is not likely to have much happiness in her future, judging from present prospects. There are whispers in the house that the Polish count is poor and that the landlady is growing impatient because his board-bill is not paid. They have moved lately into a suite of small rooms on the ground floor which open upon a little side garden, and so they are quite separated from the main building, and can live as privately as they like.

Yesterday I took a walk with Monsieur and Madame Laufait. We chose the usual promenade, the road leading to Schneckenberg, because there is a broad side-walk all the way. And as usual we met a good many people, troops of young ladies from the institutes and convent schools, marching sedately two and two, with teachers at the front and rear of the long procession, city families going for afternoon coffee to the various beer gardens along the hill-side, inhabitants of the villas taking an airing outside of their own grounds. Mons. Laufait looked eagerly at all the pretty girls and handsome women we met, and frequently paused on the side-walk to gaze after their retreating figures. I don't

know whether his wife noticed him or not, at any rate she pretended not to. But she seemed quite annoyed when, in the course of conversation, her husband announced that he considered the fame of *Ninon de l'Enclos* the most enviable of any recorded in history. That was indeed a *Frenchy* decision, and Madame Laufait protested with great fervour against such an opinion. In general she endorses all her husband says, and she actually seems proud of his earlier reputation as a duellist. They are a strangely ill-assorted couple, and I often wonder how it will all end. Probably in the most matter-of-fact way. She will go on shutting her eyes to what she would rather not see in his conduct, and he will take his ease, and eat, drink, and be merry, on her money. If she dies first he will enjoy her wealth without encumbrance, and if he dies first she will hallow his memory and imagine that her married life was happy.

The young Polish countess goes with her father every morning to early mass in the village church, and I have seen her there several times alone, praying before the Virgin's altar, when there was no service going on. They are evidently in trouble, and I hope they find comfort in their religion. I often stray into the church during my solitary walks about the village. It is a noble old edifice containing many interesting memorials in the way of tombstones and altar pictures. Our churches in America are too new to inspire much veneration ; but in these old-world sanctuaries the air seems heavy with the sighs and prayers and songs of praise of uncounted generations gone to dust.

We have had a great sensation in our usually quiet Pension. This afternoon, when Madame Laufait and I returned from a country walk, we found the Domanoff daughters in a group around the front door, wringing their hands and uttering little cries of distress. We asked what had happened ; but no one answered us. Madame Laufait seized the arm of the eldest girl and begged

her to tell what was the trouble ; but mademoiselle only rolled up her eyes and gasped, and tottered to the veranda pillar for support. Despairing of any satisfaction from these young people, we hurried into the house to question the servants. It seems that a light carriage was driving rapidly past the house just as little Master Domanoff started to cross the street, and he was knocked down and run over. His escape was wonderful, for with the exception of a bruise on one leg, there appeared to be no injury. The doctor examined him thoroughly and put him to bed and gave him something to quiet his nerves, assuring the family that there was no cause for alarm.

When I was thinking it all over up in my room, I could not help being struck by the contrast between the conduct of these Russian girls and the probable demeanour of American or English girls under similar circumstances. I did not wonder that the demoiselles Domanoff could not immediately recover from the excitement, even when they knew that the danger was happily over ; but there was a remarkable lack of self-control in their behaviour, together with an evident desire to *show off*, to affect more sensibility than they really felt, and to force other people to make an ado over them.

In the evening Madame Domanoff joined our circle in the parlour, as the boy was quietly sleeping, with a nurse from one of the Schneckenberg hospitals in attendance. The time was mostly spent in exclamations over the accident, and in frequent embracing and kissing of the fortunate mother by her daughters and several of the guests who are on intimate terms with the family. Mdlle. Olga played a subordinate part in these demonstrations, and sat watching the others with her usual sullen expression, thinking, no doubt, how much less her relations would have cared, if she, instead of her brother, had been run over.

Mons. Laufait has distinguished himself in connection with the Domanoff accident. While we were all exclaiming and wondering over the affair, he had the enterprise to write it out for one of

the Schneckenberg newspapers, and this morning we were edified by seeing a brief summary of the event in print. Madame Domanoff was much gratified by the attention, and Mons. Laufait was treated with the homage due to a successful author. Nor was this the end of the story. When the bell rang for dinner, Mons. Laufait's place was vacant, and his wife said she could not imagine what had become of him, as she had not seen him since breakfast. But when dinner was about half over, the door was thrown open and the missing one appeared, escorting another gentleman, a stranger, whom he led to a small table on the other side of the room, seating himself beside him with his back to us all. To be sure, he had bowed to the company with even more than his usual elegance on entering the room; but he never looked towards his wife, and his whole manner seemed to say that the guest was his own property and he wished to be the only one to entertain him. The two carried on an animated conversation all dinner-time, and Mons. Laufait sent for extra wine and made a feast of the occasion. As the table had been prepared beforehand, it was plain that Mons. Laufait had given notice of his expected guest, and through the servants waiting on our table, the mystery was solved. The stranger was a reporter from the newspaper office in Schneckenberg, who had been sent out to see if he could pick up any additional items concerning the accident, and Mons. Laufait had happened to meet him in the garden, and after escorting him about all the morning, had invited him to dinner. Why he did not bring him to the regular table (where there is now abundance of room), and introduce him to his wife and give him a sight of the now celebrated Domanoff family, I am at a loss to conceive. It was all his vanity I suppose; though why he should be so much elated at having written a bit of news for a daily paper, and why he should make so much ceremony over a hack reporter, is another puzzle. If the stranger had been Victor Hugo himself, Mons. Laufait could not have treated him with more deference!

Poor Madame Laufait was excessively mortified at being ignored in so marked a manner before us all. She ate scarcely any dinner,

but she remained in her place until after her husband had left his, and had started off with his guest to catch the omnibus for Schneckenberg, and then she went directly to her room, instead of going with the rest of us into the garden, as she usually does. Her room adjoins mine, and when I went upstairs I heard the faint tinkle of her guitar, and her poor, cracked voice crooning over "*The Land o' the Leal*," which is her favourite song. She cannot sing nor play any better than the majority of her countrywomen; but she carries her guitar about with her everywhere, and she told me once that she was very fond of Scotch songs, because they reminded her of happy times in her youth. So when I heard her singing this afternoon I knew she must be feeling melancholy, and after hesitating awhile I went and knocked at her door to invite her to go to walk. She seemed glad to be diverted from her own thoughts, and while she was putting up her guitar and changing her dress, she told me a good deal about her early life at the old family seat in England. Her eyes were red, and I knew by her voice that she had been crying, and during our walk she would now and then heave a deep sigh, which I pretended not to notice.

Friends and relations often jar upon each other's moods without knowing it; but to wound deliberately the feelings of a life-companion seems the very refinement of cruelty. I am disgusted with Monsieur Laufait!

We have had a young Baptist minister from Indiana at our table for several days. He went away this afternoon, mourning over the household as "a godless set." He was a brisk little man, eager to obey the apostolic injunction as to exhorting in season and out of season, but totally regardless of the suggested wisdom of a teacher making himself all things to all men in order to increase his influence. He harangued us collectively at every meal, and asked us individually at chance encounters whether we had "found Christ." He insisted upon asking a blessing at the

table, and was angry with Frau Wartheim because she would not allow him to summon the boarders to family prayers every morning after breakfast, and every evening before going to bed.

‡ Day before yesterday a large party of us started for an excursion to the Tanteberg, where we were to stay all night and see the sun rise in the morning. Mr. Beebee, the Baptist minister, went too, and was one of the first to answer the horn which announced the dawn. We were all wrapped up in bed blankets, and made a very funny appearance, as we assembled one after another upon the lawn in front of the hotel. The sky was perfectly clear, and we were sure of a glorious view. Pretty soon Mr. Beebee came up to a few of us who could speak English (he cannot speak any other language himself), and proposed that on our first glimpse of the sun we should strike up the Doxology—"Praise God from whom all blessings flow." We tried to dissuade him from the plan. There was a large crowd of strangers of various nationalities present, but we seemed to be the only persons speaking English, and for us to set up one of our psalm tunes at a moment when even the most demonstrative people are usually silent seemed impertinent, or, at least, in poor taste. So we refused, and he went away grumbling something about it being cowardly to refrain from bearing our testimony before idolaters.

The rosy flush in the East grew brighter, and little flecks of golden vapour began to appear in the upper blue. The talk and laughter died away, and everybody looked eagerly at the horizon, which was growing more strongly luminous with every added moment. Suddenly the rounded rim of the glowing disk cleared the tops of the distant forest, and a level ray lighted up the vast expanse of open country between, and shone into our expectant eyes.

Just then, as the world became new again to each one of us, and silence was welcome to our separate thoughts, Mr. Beebee, perched upon a rock close by, burst out with his "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

Many turned towards him with surprise, and a faint hiss came from the lips of the few least willing to be disturbed in their

meditations. But he only sang the louder for the evident disapprobation, and I was thankful that the Doxology was comprised in one verse. If Mr. Beebee were a fine singer the interruption might have been more welcome, but his voice is utterly insignificant by nature, and entirely unimproved by art, so that his strains must have jarred terribly upon the ears of cultivated foreigners familiar with the best music, and quite unable to appreciate the singer's fancied duty of "bearing his cross" in the face of a stiff-necked and rebellious generation.

Mr. Beebee's daily walk and conversation remind me more strongly than anything else has done for a long time, of how far away from home I am, and how different the customs and modes of thought of these old nations are from those in which I was brought up. In America this man's zeal would be admired by a large proportion of the community, and smiled at as harmless enthusiasm by those who might prefer other methods of inculcating religious truth. Here, he is looked upon as a crazy man by some, and as a boor and a bore by all. I must confess that his habit of addressing strangers without preface or introduction, and demanding to know the state of their souls the moment he catches a glimpse of their bodies, gives him the appearance of being very inquisitive and meddlesome. It is almost as bad as the impertinence of that latest invention of American society, "*the interviewer*," in whose function social tyranny and vulgar curiosity have reached the utmost limit of human presumption.

I was witness yesterday to a very amusing scene. There is a Scotch gentleman here, who is more patient with Mr. Beebee than are most of the guests, and consequently Mr. Beebee gives him no peace. I happened to come into the dining-room when the two were in the midst of a discussion.

Mr. Muir seemed to be tired of the controversy, and he wound up by saying :

"Well, the whole story with me is this, I can't believe."

"Who?" asked Mr. Beebee.

"I," was the answer.

"Who?" repeated Mr. Beebee,

Mr. Muir raised his voice.

"I. I tell you I can't believe."

"Who?" persisted Mr. Beebee.

Mr. Muir looked at him as though he suspected him of having suddenly lost his senses, or, at least, his hearing.

"I," he said at last, very distinctly.

"Who?" thundered Mr. Beebee.

Mr. Muir got up impatiently and left the room without another word.

"There!" cried Mr. Beebee, with triumph in his voice, "I knew I could convict him, even if I couldn't convert him. You see he was left speechless at last. His proud heart did not dare confess that he did not believe in God!"

"I don't think the trouble was in his heart," I replied, "it was in his intellect. You said '*who*' when you ought to have said '*whom*.' The stumbling-block was English grammar!"

"Grammar!" he repeated, with infinite scorn. "What has that to do with saving souls? It is grace he needs, not grammar."

"But *you* need grammar!" I couldn't help saying, and he was good-natured enough to laugh, as an American always will laugh, at anything approaching to a joke.

I winced the more at Mr. Beebee's mistakes and oddities, because the English people at the table are quick to notice and comment upon them.

As though there were no illiterate or absurd people in England! And they cannot say much; for only last week we had two members of the "Salvation Army" here; bold, hoydenish English girls about sixteen years old, who lectured us grey-haired, settled-down people about our wicked lives and our need of a change of heart, and then stole Frau Wartheim's cakes and preserves as often as they found the pantry door unlocked. Frau Wartheim caught them at it finally, in time to prevent her from sending away a valuable servant whom she had suspected of the pilfering.

I must say these modern developments of Christianity are very discouraging to those of us who try to believe that the world is

growing better and wiser every day, and that knowledge is going to triumph by-and-bye over ignorance and vice !

The Domanoffs went away to-day. The house seems empty without them, more on account of their numbers than their individual and collective powers of entertainment. They are too commonplace to awaken deep interest, though I should like to know what becomes of Mademoiselle Olga.

The Laufaits go back to Paris to-morrow.

A fine-looking Polish nobleman has been here, as a suitor for Mdlle. Nina Romanska, our little Polish countess. He is said to be very rich, and he is certainly a refined, agreeable man. And Mdlle. Nina loves him and would be happy to marry him, but her mother will not hear of being separated from her daughter, and the young count cannot take the mother with him, as he expects to spend the next two or three years in travelling. There have been numerous discussions between the father and the lover in the garden, and several times hysterical shrieks from the old countess have reached our ears, the result probably of united attempts of the family to bring her to reason, and induce her to consent to a temporary separation from her daughter.

It is all over, the stranger is gone, and Mdlle. Nina comes to the table with her former pensive smile. She keeps her thoughts to herself, and no one would guess from her manner that she has just undergone a bitter disappointment ; but she probably pours out her feelings at the Virgin's shrine in the village church, where I have so often seen her kneeling and praying all alone.

A young American gentleman has taken Mons. Laufait's vacant seat at table, and has established himself in the attic chamber directly

over my room. As I am the only other American in the house at present, we have become quite well acquainted already, and he is so much younger than I am that no one can make remarks when I sit with him in the garden, or carry on a conversation with him in English at the table. He speaks French and German fluently, and is on friendly terms with the whole household. I like him, because he is frank and natural in his ways, and seems to be earnest in his work. His name is Carter Montague. Since finishing his college course in America, he has spent most of his time abroad, collecting material for a history of the gipsy race, which he hopes to write and publish by-and-bye. He was very ill with Roman fever last spring, and has come to this quiet Pension to rest and recruit his strength. He looks pale, though I should take his natural complexion to be of a sallow hue. I suppose he would generally be considered a remarkably handsome man, as he is tall and slender, with abundant black hair, large melancholy black eyes and very regular features. His is not the style of beauty that I admire most, but I can see that it is a good specimen of its kind. The only other young gentleman in the house at present is an Italian, Signor Morello, very dark and picturesque-looking, with wild curly hair, glittering black eyes, and a heavy moustache. He is connected with the Italian legation, and is obliged to stay a good deal in Schneckenberg ; but having a passion for boating, he has brought down a yacht to this small lake, and spends most of his leisure on board, coming to the Pension only for his meals and to sleep. Unfortunately for these two young gentlemen there are no young ladies in the house at present, and I am afraid they find the society rather dull.

The landlady has been telling me this evening about Signor Morello. He belongs to a family of some importance, although they have lost the greater part of their once large possessions in the neighbourhood of Turin. But this son is expected to restore the former grandeur of the race, through a marriage with a noble heiress, to whom he has been for some time betrothed. She is

not old enough to be married, and the match is a family arrangement, in which the young man's feelings are not very deeply involved. He therefore considers himself free to find as much amusement as possible during the interval of waiting, and has carried on several desperate flirtations since coming to this part of the world. Only a short time before my arrival he had a harrowing love affair with a French girl, which was broken off by the relations on both sides, the young lady being sent to a convent, while the lover remained here to mope and mourn alone. Frau Wartheim says he has shunned the society of ladies since that event, and seems disposed to keep quiet until the time comes for him to marry. He is just the sort of man to make a sentimental Miss desperate about him ; and his naturally romantic appearance is heightened by his picturesque yachting suit of dark-blue flannel, open at the throat, where it is loosely held together by a black silk scarf with long floating ends.

An American lady with a grown-up daughter arrived to-day and settled down in the handsomest suite of rooms on the first floor, for a stay of several weeks. They are from New York, and are very fashionable and dressy. This evening the young lady stayed on the terrace with Mr. Montague, while Mrs. Beaumont (the mother) and I sat and talked in an arbour close by. She says that her daughter is engaged to a very wealthy gentleman in New York, who is coming to Europe in the fall to be married.

Mr. Montague spoke of Miss Beaumont to-day when we were alone in the garden after breakfast. He does not like her much. He says she has not sufficient reserve. And a little later, Miss Beaumont gave me her opinion of him. She says he asks too many questions and does not answer frankly when questioned in his turn. She thinks he is deceitful. I have always thought him very frank ; but I suppose he speaks more freely to me because I am so much older.

Miss Beaumont had a good many inquiries to make about Signor Morello. She considers him very handsome, and says she does not blame him for flirting with all his might while he is free, if he is to be put into the bondage of a loveless marriage by-and-bye. I tell her there is one way of escape open to him if he does not want to marry the heiress ; he can go to work, as young Americans do, and make a living for himself.

A Greek family, named Patras, consisting of father and mother, a young lady daughter, and three small children, have been added to our circle. Mr. Montague told me about them before they came. He knew them in Athens two years ago, where they were very hospitable and friendly towards him. He said it was particularly agreeable to be with them, because they had somewhat of the American idea with regard to the social intercourse of young people, and allowed gentlemen to be polite to their daughter without imagining that love and marriage must follow. They had associated a great deal with the American colony in Athens, hence their uncommon liberality of sentiment in this respect. I am sure I hope the daughter understands the system as well as her parents do ; for she is very beautiful, and she cannot help seeing that she is universally admired. There is a simplicity of manner about the whole family that is very charming. They are all exceedingly handsome, with the straight features one naturally associates with the Greeks, although among the many representations of that nation whom I have met the majority had coarse and heavy faces.

Miss Beaumont raves about Eudora Patras' beauty, which is generous in her, for she herself is not handsome. Last evening, after supper, we were entertained with *tableaux*, prepared principally by the Beaumonts, in which the whole Greek family appeared in various characters, attired in costumes of their country. The daughter looked exquisitely lovely. After it was over, I went

out into the garden to enjoy the moonlight, and there, in one of the nearest arbours, were Mdle. Patras and Mr. Montague. She was crying, and he was apparently remonstrating with her, or explaining something. I went on up the path as fast as possible, and as I passed the end of the arbour I heard him say (in Italian, which they generally speak together) "*é niente*," and she replied between her sobs, "*é molto*." I am afraid the poor girl is not quite Americanised after all, and has mistaken Mr. Montague's friendliness for a warmer sentiment.

Since that little scene in the arbour, I cannot help watching Mr. Montague's manner towards Mdle. Eudora. There has evidently been a considerable degree of intimacy between them, and I imagine he sees the danger of continuing former relations, and is gradually breaking off.

This afternoon something very strange happened. Madame Patras invited me to join the family in a walk. We decided to go up to St. Florian's Chapel, and soon after leaving the main road we met Mr. Montague, who willingly accepted the general invitation to accompany us.

The path was wide, and we walked for a time all abreast; but when it grew narrow, so that only two persons could go together, Mr. Montague stationed himself at my side. I saw that Mdle. Eudora, who had looked unusually cheerful from the time of his meeting us, felt depressed at his keeping away from her, and I kept turning round and speaking to her, so as to bring her into our conversation, and give her the opportunity she seemed to want. But it was of no use. Mr. Montague was silent whenever I appealed to her, and when we stopped to rest in the cool shady
e ally at the top of the hill, he resisted her little attempt to secure him as a neighbour, and went and sat down beyond her father, where a large tree would prevent her approach from the other direction. She was evidently anxious to speak with him, and her

mother looked as though she knew about the matter, whatever it was, and sympathised with her daughter. I was afraid every moment that Mdlle. Patras would burst into tears. Nobody said much, and I was glad when a move was made to return. I kept close to Madame Patras on the way back, and Mr. Montague stalked ahead with her husband. Mdlle. Eudora stayed with us, but once she took courage and stepped up to Mr. Montague's side. He told her in a low voice to go back, and she returned to us, more downcast than ever. I suspect that there has been a quarrel, and that she is ready before he is to make up.

A new surprise. This morning, when I opened my door, I found a letter twisted into the keyhole. It proved to be a note from Mr. Montague, saying that he was called away by telegram to meet relatives in Brussels, and should probably be absent several weeks. He left his farewell for the company, especially for the Patras family, to whom he would write on his arrival at Brussels. There was a great outcry when I delivered the message at breakfast time. Everybody was sorry to lose Mr. Montague's society; he seems to be a favourite with the whole house, excepting perhaps Miss Beaumont, who has but little to say to him, and Mr. Parkhurst, who shrugs his shoulders and *humphs* over Mr. Montague's stories of adventure in the far West. But Miss Beaumont may have instinctively perceived that she was not quite up to Mr. Montague's standard for women, and Mr. Parkhurst is a pedantic old bachelor who has evidently been soured by his experience of life.

Yesterday afternoon as I was sitting alone on the terrace with my sewing, I was joined by Mons. Patras, who asked leave to speak with me on private business. I consented, of course, and he began at once to ask questions about Mr. Montague, his family, his prospects in life, etc. I told him I knew nothing about Mr. Montague, excepting what he had casually mentioned himself,

which amounted to nothing more, and probably to not nearly so much, as he must have related while in the Patras family at Athens. Mr. Patras then said that his daughter was engaged to Mr. Montague, and that they were all astonished at his recent behaviour, which they hoped to have explained in the promised letter from Brussels. They feared that Eudora might have offended him, though she was not conscious of having done so. I asked whether the engagement was a regular betrothal, and he said "No." Mr. Montague had, as yet, spoken only to the daughter, as was the custom in America. He had even wished her to keep his offer to herself until he could arrange his affairs at home and be ready to ask her hand of her parents. But Eudora had told her mother without delay, though, as she did this without Mr. Montague's knowledge, the parents did not feel at liberty to betray their possession of the secret.

I was greatly puzzled over this communication from Mr. Patras. Remembering what Mr. Montague had said about the family before their arrival, and what his recent conduct had been towards them, I felt sure that they had misunderstood his intentions. It was impossible to suspect them of a wish to entrap him, and the young girl, though showing her feelings so freely towards him, was exceedingly modest and reserved towards all the other gentlemen of the company. She certainly believed that she had a right to his affection.

I did not know what to say ; but I finally told Mr. Patras that although many young people in America entered lightly, and on their own responsibility, into engagements to marry, still the family and friends were usually notified immediately of the event, and that in cases where secrecy was observed the affair was apt either to end unhappily, or to come to nothing by mutual consent. We agreed that Mr. Montague's promised letter would probably set the matter right.

Miss Beaumont says she is tired of seeing Signor Morello mope about so solemn and silent, and she is going to coax him to join

our evening gatherings and go with us to walk. Her mother begged her to let the young man alone.

"What is it to you whether he is melancholy or not?" she exclaimed. "You'd better be thinking about Mr. Mayhew and your trousseau!"

Whereupon Miss Beaumont made up a face of real or pretended disgust, and ran off to put her threat into execution.

About half an hour afterwards the piano struck up, and I heard two voices singing the bridal-chamber duet from *Lohengrin*. Miss Beaumont has often given us great pleasure by her fine singing but nobody suspected Signor Morello of possessing a rare tenor voice and thorough musical cultivation. We shall doubtless profit from the young lady's whim; but, somehow, I tremble for the fate of the performers.

"Fühl' ich zu dir so süß mich entbrennen
Athme ich Wonne die nur Gott verleih't,"

keeps ringing in my ears like a prophecy.

And she is engaged; and so is he, besides being absorbed in regret for a recent disappointment!

I feel so anxious about the Patras affair! It is now nearly a week since Mr. Montague's sudden departure, and not a word has yet been heard from him. Miss Patras looks pale and sober, and her parents are evidently uneasy. If I only knew Mr. Montague's address I would write to him; for I am afraid he has been taken ill somewhere on the journey. But Brussels was the only place he mentioned, and he was not intending to stay long there. So there is nothing to do but wait patiently for his own report of himself.

Meantime I have enough to occupy my thoughts in the rapidly developing friendship, or whatever it may be called, between Miss Beaumont and Signor Morello. Although in the beginning the young man kept himself so coldly aloof, he seems to have yielded to the first advance on her part, and now he overwhelms her with the most particular attentions. They take long walks, and sing

together in the parlour, and spend whole evenings on the terrace, and she has been out with him several times in his little yacht, to the distress of her mother, who is sure they will both be drowned. Mrs. Beaumont disapproves of the new acquaintance entirely, and is very distant in her manner towards Signor Morello, but Miss Beaumont does not seem to stand at all in awe of her mother, and pursues her way with a recklessness which one might excuse in a very young and inexperienced girl, but which is rather startling in so mature a belle.

I wonder what Mr. Montague would say now to her goings-on ! His first impression of her character, that *she had not sufficient reserve*, seems to have been correct.

The Beaumont-Morello romance waxes more and more intense. I never before saw such complete surrender on both sides to an apparently irresistible passion. It is like boy-and-girl love, without any regard to propriety, and without a thought of evil. They devote themselves to each other in society in the most conspicuous manner ; they seek every occasion of being alone together ; they seem to appropriate the moon for their own exclusive benefit, and every flower in the garden is associated with their love. It was a true presentiment that made me tremble when I first heard them singing the *Lohengrin* duet, and now they have added to that hymn of exalted sentiment the fervid complaint of *Gilda* and *Gualtier* in *Rigoletto*. Only once, on the stage (when *Basta* and *Kalisch* sang together) have I heard such thrilling expression in Verdi's most tender melody. It is a delight to hear those two young creatures warbling so beautifully ; and yet I wish they would not sing so often and feel so strongly what they sing. Even as I write, they have just reached the close of that passionate outburst, and through my open window the last wailing accord comes stealing in upon the fragrant summer air—

“ Si cara a me
Ah si per te ! ”

Late in the evening, after the society has broken up and we

have all gone to our rooms, Signor Morello lingers in the garden until Miss Beaumont comes out into her balcony to give him a separate and final "good-night." She leans over the balustrade, and they exchange a few sweet words, and she probably throws him down a flower, and, no doubt, their faces look lovely to each other in the moonlight, and then Mrs. Beaumont makes an angry protest from within, and the girl waves her white hand in farewell and disappears.

This habit has gained for the couple the names of *Romeo* and *Juliet*, and everybody in the house appears to regard the affair with somewhat of the sympathetic forbearance which is universally felt for the impetuous lovers of Verona. Mr. Parkhurst goes farther. He is genuinely interested in the attachment. He says it looks more like true love than anything he has seen for nearly half a century, and he only hopes it will last and bear all the tests which it is sure to encounter.

I never dreamed that Mr. Parkhurst hid so much sentiment under his dry, sarcastic manner. Frau Warheim is on Mrs. Beaumont's side, and is angry with both of the young people. She is acquainted with the Morello family, and knows all their plans for their son's future, and she is indignant that a stranger from the New World should venture to interfere in the affairs of so old and so noble a race. She is especially shocked at the frequent excursions on the yacht, which, however, only amount to an hour's sail now and then, not very far from shore, the lake being so notoriously unsafe on account of gusts of wind which come suddenly from the opposite mountains, that Signor Morello does not find much use for his tiny boat.

I received a letter this morning from Mr. Montague, the contents of which I hastened to impart to the Patras family. It is a short letter, merely to inform me that he is obliged to return immediately to America on business which will occupy him for an indefinite time. After a few general messages to his fellow-boarders, he states that he sent a long letter to Mr. Patras, dated August

17th, at Brussels, where he waited nearly two weeks for a reply, and then wrote again. After waiting another week he was obliged to leave for Havre. He enclosed an address in New York, which he begged me to give to the Patras family, in case of their still being in my vicinity.

It is very strange. Mr. Patras has been to the post-office here, and at Schneckenberg, and has telegraphed to the office at Brussels, but no trace can be found of the missing letters. He is inclined to be sceptical as to their ever having been written, but I can see that Mdlle. Patras is much more hopeful since I told my news. They have decided to return to Athens next week. It seems they came here principally to meet Mr. Montague, who had recommended the place very strongly in his recent letters. He has corresponded with the family ever since he was in Greece, writing generally to the daughter, with a view to her progress in English, which she understands pretty well. Mr. Patras has taken Mr. Montague's American address, but says he shall wait to hear from him before writing; Mr. Montague knows their address in Athens, and it is not likely that *all* the letters crossing the Atlantic will be lost! I am sorry he is so suspicious and bitter, for I am afraid the family have misunderstood my countryman's manner, and will suffer in consequence of the mistake.

Looking out of my window just now I saw Mdlle. Nina Romanska crossing the garden on her way home from early mass. What a contrast to the feverish excitement of feeling which prevails in our social atmosphere at present is this young girl's silent renunciation and unwavering devotion!

The time is approaching for the arrival of Miss Beaumont's affianced, and Mrs. Beaumont is in great trouble. She has just had a long and serious talk with her daughter, and matters will soon have to be decided in one way or the other.

She called me up into her room this evening after the young

people had gone out for a walk. I feel sorry for the woman, for she does not know what to do, and nobody can advise her on so delicate a subject. She began by saying that she should never have thought of troubling a comparative stranger with the discussion of her daughter's love affairs if that daughter herself had not made the subject common property through her own wilful behaviour. After this somewhat formal introduction she burst out with :

"What am I to do ? If you know any way out of this dilemma I hope you will help me ! Here is Mr. Mayhew, probably on the ocean this very moment, coming over to marry that foolish girl, and not suspecting in the least that her feelings have changed. And here am I, as determined as ever that I will never countenance her throwing him over and marrying that Italian adventurer. She engaged herself of her own free will to Mr. Mayhew, and she was in distress all last winter for fear he would prefer one of her rivals, who was trying her best to catch him. He is a great catch, and I am free to confess that I should be delighted to see Robina married to him, for besides being immensely rich he is a good, honourable man. He is a widower, and so he knows how to treat a wife by this time."

"Perhaps Miss Beaumont thinks now that there is too great a difference in their ages, or perhaps she does not like the idea of being the second choice," I suggested.

"Not at all," Mrs. Beaumont hastened to answer. "He isn't very much older. He wasn't married more than three or four years. Robina knew his wife. And as to being the second choice, she isn't Signor Morello's first choice by any means, as we all know very well. It is a miserable, silly flirtation, and that is all there is of it on either side. I have told her to-day that she must make up her mind at once. She must either have this business broken off and done with entirely before Mr. Mayhew gets here, or she must give up all idea of being supported any longer on my money, for I have vowed that I will never give her a cent if she marries Morello. My fortune is entirely in my own hands, and though it would all eventually be hers, in the natural

course of things, I shall will it away from her, if she disobeys me in this matter. She knows I am in earnest, and I think the talk I have had with her to-day will lead her to change her course. I don't believe that even Morello is such a fool as to venture to marry on the small salary he gets from the embassy, and that rich uncle he talks about may live a hundred years, and may never give him anything after all. Of course Mr. Mayhew will have to be told about Robina's conduct even if she does give Morello up. I won't have all these people laughing at him behind his back and thinking that we have deceived him. And maybe he won't have *her* when he finds out how fickle she has been. Oh, be thankful that you haven't any daughter to worry the life out of you!"

I said what I could to comfort the poor lady, who looked almost worn out with anxiety. In the way of counsel, I only ventured to suggest that, in case of Robina's consenting to break off her intimacy with Signor Morello, she ought to be allowed time to understand her feelings, to see whether she really could forget this romantic passage in her experience. But Mrs. Beaumont cut me short.

"Delay! There has been too much delay already. Mr. Mayhew wanted to be married last spring, and, if it hadn't been for Robina's foolish notion that she must come to Europe herself to select her *trousseau*, this dreadful affair would never have happened. And Mr. Mayhew is a banker in New York, and has no time to waste on her nonsense. She has just got to cure herself in double-quick time! It was all arranged before we left that we should be back in October. Two of Mr. Mayhew's sisters are to be married in November, with a great flourish of trumpets, and it would never do for him to be absent at such a time. And there is his house, all ready for Robina to step into it; and here she is, mooning around with a sentimental fool, who looks more like a brigand than a Christian—and what am I going to do about it?"

It was late when I left Mrs. Beaumont's room, and, soon after reaching my own, I heard the front gate open, and, looking through the blind, I saw Signor Morello and Miss Beaumont

come into the garden from their long walk in the moonlight. They stood still a moment in the shadow of the plantain tree, and then she went into the house alone, while he waited under the balcony for the usual "Good-night," and then walked slowly towards the gate, where he turned and gave a long look and a despairing wave of the hand, before disappearing in the shadow of the garden wall.

This morning Miss Beaumont did not appear at breakfast, and, after I had left the table, her mother followed me out into the garden to tell me the news. It seems that the parting I witnessed was the final farewell, and Signor Morello went from the garden to take the omnibus for Schneckenberg, so as to leave by an early train for a tour of aimless travel. He has leave of absence for a month, and will not return until the time has expired.

"Robina did not sleep a wink last night, and she is crying her eyes out over this wretched business. But it is ended now, and she will soon be all right," said Mrs. Beaumont with a cheerful indifference, which was surprising to me, notwithstanding the many proofs she had already shown of a lack of sentiment.

The rest of us, even those who disapprove most strongly of the selfish devotion of the two young people, cannot help betraying a degree of sympathy with their romantic affection; but the mother has never had any mercy for her daughter's feelings in this affair. It may be that her hard-heartedness is caused in part by her scepticism as to the genuineness of the passion. She says herself that she has watched Robina through too many flirtations to be worried about the effect of this particular one. She is triumphant over the fact that Signor Morello agreed to the separation on the ground of lack of money to marry.

"Do you call that love?" she asked with scorn. "We all know that his salary would enable them to live in a small way, and if they were really in earnest they would be willing to eat crusts, if only they could be together. But the truth is, they are both spoiled by the world, and luckily they have sense enough to

know that they cannot be happy unless they live in luxury. And I am very sure that if I were to give Robina a fortune, and allow them to marry, it wouldn't be three months before they would be quarrelling. Life isn't all billing and cooing, and singing opera duets, and that is all they have been thinking about."

Everybody in the house knows now that Signor Morello has gone into voluntary banishment, and that his intimacy with Miss Beaumont is ended. We do all we can to cheer her up, but she is sad and silent, and takes no interest in anything. Next to the principal actors in the drama, Mr. Parkhurst seems to be the person most severely disappointed at the turn affairs have taken. He scarcely speaks to the Beaumonts, and his general remarks are even more bitter and cynical than formerly.

Mrs. Beaumont received a telegram this morning, announcing Mr. Mayhew's arrival at Liverpool. She is going to meet him at Schneckenberg, and tell him the whole story, so that in case of his engagement with Robina being broken, there may be no scene in this house for people to gossip about. She is all the time trying to scold Robina into cheerfulness, telling her to "shake herself together," and act like other people, as though the poor girl could forget in a moment such an experience as she has just passed through. I suppose she is anxious to have Robina appear as usual when Mr. Mayhew arrives. I like the woman's honesty in resolving to tell him the whole story. She does not seem to imagine that any other course of proceeding is possible. Robina appears utterly indifferent as to the result of the disclosure. Perhaps she entertains a secret hope that, in the event of Mr. Mayhew giving her up, her mother may relent, and smooth the way to her marriage with Signor Morello.

A young French lady arrived to-day. She is very handsome,

and as fascinating in her manner as most of her nation are. And this evening, a magnificent Russian count was added to our company, an old man, covered with orders, and evidently rolling in wealth. He has taken a large suite of rooms, and has two lacqueys to wait on him.

He is very affable, even loquacious. He told me a good part of his family history this evening in the parlour. He has eleven children, and a number of grandchildren. His three youngest daughters are now at school in Berlin, and are coming here with their mother by-and-bye. Meantime, Count Gorgikoff rolls about the country in his fine carriage, with his servants and his dog, stopping wherever he pleases, and doing whatever he likes.

Mrs. Beaumont went to Schneckenberg day before yesterday to meet Mr. Mayhew, and a few hours afterwards she telegraphed to Miss Beaumont to join her. The next day they all arrived here. Mr. Mayhew is a fine-looking gentleman, and seems devoted to his betrothed—for betrothed they still are, and the wedding is to come off very soon. Mrs. Beaumont came to my room last night after the party had separated, and told me all about the state of affairs. She said Mr. Mayhew only laughed when she described Robina's flirtation. He said it was quite natural; he knew all about those sentimental Italians, and was sure that as soon as Robina was married she would forget this queer episode. Since it is to be, I am glad the difficulty has been so easily overcome, and perhaps I am wasting a great deal of feeling over the girl. It may be that her mother and her future husband understand her character better than I do. And yet I cannot see how anybody could forget such scenes as she has passed through this summer. How can she ever look at the moon again, without thinking of those romantic evenings on the terrace; or see roses bloom another year, without remembering the fragrance and colour of this summer's buds and blossoms; or sing, without recalling the tones which used to mingle so harmoniously with her own?

She seems more like herself at present, and walks and drives with apparent willingness whenever Mr. Mayhew invites her. But she is more pensive than formerly, and the change is an improvement. When she first came, her manners were too pronounced; now she has a little of the retiring gentleness which mature persons of both sexes admire so much in a girl. Mr. Mayhew is evidently very much in love, and does not appear to be of a jealous disposition. Probably Mrs. Beaumont's straightforward conduct, in which her daughter acquiesced, removed any doubts he might otherwise have entertained, and then his having been married before makes him more lenient towards a woman's faults and weaknesses.

The Beaumonts left this morning for Berlin. The marriage is to take place at the American embassy, and the party are to sail from Hamburg a few days afterwards.

I happened to be in the dining-room when Robina came around to say "Good-bye," and Mr. Parkhurst was there too, taking a late breakfast as usual. Miss Beaumont's farewells were hurried and non-committal; so much had happened that there was nothing to say, and she was about to leave the room when Mr. Parkhurst stopped her.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that your decision is a disappointment to me. If you had remained firm, I would have removed all hindrances. I was in hopes that I had at last met with an instance of true love, and I was going to give you and Morello my fortune. I am old and alone in the world, and my wants are few. You might have had all the rest. If you had only been faithful for a little while!"

Robina turned so pale while he was speaking that I thought she was going to faint away. But she rallied by a strong effort, and saying only, "I thank you for your kind intentions," she hurried out of the room, and I went upstairs by the other door, leaving Mr. Parkhurst talking to himself in an excited way, as he often does when others are present. He is a strange man! The

idea of his having interested himself so much in the young people's affairs as to decide upon giving them his fortune ! I suppose they couldn't and wouldn't have accepted the gift under any circumstances, and yet such things have been done, and Robina will have this new revelation to trouble her, just as she needs all the comfort she might have felt in the conviction that the fates were against her, and that there was no other way but to marry Mr. Mayhew.

I met her again with the whole party, when we all went out into the garden to see them to their carriage. She went away in apparently good spirits, and of course we acted as though nothing had occurred to sadden her during her stay. Everybody liked Mr. Mayhew, and admired the generous spirit in which he had received the mortifying intelligence which had met him on his arrival. I hope with all my heart that they will be happy ; but I cannot help doubting her power to forget this recent romance.

Count Gorgikoff appears to be completely bewitched by the young French lady, Mademoiselle de Tournay. He follows her everywhere, and at table can scarcely eat his meals for gazing at her. She seems amused by his devotion, but I find his conduct very disagreeable, married man as he is, and old enough to be her father.

A Mr. and Mrs. Manners, an elderly couple from Boston, joined our circle this evening. There was an amusing incident connected with their arrival. They telegraphed for rooms several days ago, and a carriage was sent to Schneckenberg to meet them at the appointed train. The man in charge had some difficulty in finding them amongst the crowd at the station, and when they reached the carriage they found it already occupied by two English ladies, who had taken the back seat and covered the front one with their satchels and parcels. As soon as these intruders saw the Americans approaching they called out :

"There is no room here for anybody else !"

"Oh, I guess we can make room," Mr. Manners replied good-naturedly, and began to move the belongings of the ladies, who protested with many insolent remarks, to which he made no reply, but quietly helped in his wife and then took the remaining place himself. It was pouring rain at the time, which made the situation all the more unpleasant. The servants, not understanding what was said, supposed it was all right, and drove off as soon as the passengers were seated. All the way the English ladies were sullen and scornful, but on arriving at the Pension the tables were turned. Mr. and Mrs. Manners were welcomed as expected guests, and the others were informed that the house was full and no more rooms were to be had at any price. So they were obliged to return to Schneckenberg, and pay for the use of the carriage besides. This is only one of many similar stories I have heard of English travellers, but it is not always that they are so nicely come up with as in the present case !

The American Consul came out here in great distress this morning to get some American lady to return with him, on account of a young girl who is giving the officials a great deal of trouble. It seems that having been seized with a strong desire to travel abroad, she had scraped together what little money was to be obtained in the domestic circle and had come alone to Schneckenberg, hoping to support herself by giving English lessons. But there being already many English teachers on the ground, she had not succeeded in finding pupils, and now her money was almost gone and she was in despair. She still had enough to get home with, but she absolutely refused to go back. She seemed to think that it was the duty of the Consul to support her, until she could support herself, and on his refusing to lend her the sum she asked for, she went into a fit of hysterics which frightened him and his clerks nearly out of their wits, and sent him, post-haste, to hunt up one of his countrywomen to come to the rescue. Mrs. Manners was too tired after her journey, and Mrs. Armstrong

could not leave her little boy, who had a toothache, so the lot fell upon me.

We had a hard time between us all to convince the young lady that she must give up her cherished plan and return to her friends. And in spite of the absurdity of her position and of her indelicacy in insisting that strangers ought to supply the lack of funds, I felt sorry for the poor girl, for I knew what it was to dream for years of the wonders of the Old World, amidst the crude surroundings of the New. But at last the matter was arranged, and a passage on the next steamer telegraphed for at once, so as to leave no room for a change of purpose.

The longer I stay abroad, the more I wonder over the fearless confidence with which American parents send out their young daughters alone into a world where innocence is by no means a sufficient security, and ignorance is almost sure to lead to some irreparable mistake.

It speaks well for the moral tone of American society that girls are left so much to their own devices ; but it is not safe, it cannot be safe for them to go about alone, even in America !

We have had a slight international dispute to enliven our dulness.

Among the boarders is a Mrs. Beauchamp, a rather high-and-mighty English lady, with a little boy about five years old, a sturdy, obstreperous child, whose frequent rebellions against his long-suffering nurse make house and garden ring with shrill alarms. And another boarder is Mrs. Armstrong, an American lady from some obscure town out West, with a boy of six, a delicate, graceful little fellow, who is a general pet. This forenoon, while most of our company were in the garden, little Johnny Armstrong at his mother's side, as usual, Mrs. Beauchamp made her appearance, red-faced and flurried, with the complaint that Johnny had been kicking her Harry.

"I hope he has," coolly replied Mrs. Armstrong. "I told him to do it the next time your Harry kicked him."

"What ! you told him to kick a poor little fellow younger than himself?" exclaimed Mrs. Beauchamp.

"Oh, yes," was the careless answer, "Harry is a year younger, it is true, and I said to Johnny at first that he must be patient and not return blows. But this thing is getting to be rather monotonous, for the more Johnny is quiet, the more Master Harry is cruel. So I told my son this morning that if your boy kicked him again he might kick back, and kick hard enough to put a stop to such work. Just look at Johnny's legs!"

So saying, she pulled down his long stockings and showed a surface variegated with shades of green and blue, answering to the different stages of progress towards cure.

"You can see that those bruises are pretty old, some of them; but if you examine Harry's legs you won't find any hurt older than this morning. And every time Harry kicks, Johnny will kick back, you may be sure of that!"

Mrs. Beauchamp retired in silence to her screaming son, and most of us rejoiced at her discomfiture; though no remarks were made on the subject, and Mrs. Armstrong went on with a story she was telling, just as though nothing had occurred to disturb her serenity.

This little incident led me to thinking about the general attitude of the English and Americans towards each other. I say general attitude, for of course individual intimacies tend to remove international jealousies.

The English side of the question is soon disposed of. As a rule, the English hate Americans on political grounds, and despise them on social grounds. But in America there is a wide difference of opinion and feeling concerning "our old home." Most of us cherish a tender veneration for the mother country and a cordial admiration for our far-off cousins, until we come abroad and have stayed abroad long enough to know the land and the people as they really are.

I have often been amused to watch my fellow countrymen and

countrywomen through the various stages of their disenchantment. And with the educated class of American travellers the first symptoms are almost always the same : a timid deference towards English opinion ; a disposition to yield to British encroachment in matters of convenience and comfort ; a sensitiveness to British criticisms of transatlantic speech and tone ; a joyful willingness to respond to British condescension in overtures of acquaintance.

I have seen an American woman happy for a whole day, because of being taken for an Englishwoman by one of that exclusive race. I have seen others of my compatriots miserable because of English strictures upon "Americanisms" and the "nasal twang"—as though every nation did not take liberties with its own vernacular, and as though it were any worse to speak through the nose than down in the throat. A great many Americans *do* speak through the nose, and so do a great many English, the peculiarity being characterised in England as "Suffolk singing."

The subject of "Americanisms" is frequently under discussion by experts, of whom I do not pretend to be one ; but I venture to put in a word about voices, because I have thought and observed a great deal with regard to the matter. American voices are apt to be high-pitched and clear—excellent qualifications for development in singing, but needing discipline to render the tones agreeable in speaking. The English have harsh, low-pitched voices—the fog is in all their throats, and a good singer is an extreme rarity among them. The serving classes speak low, out of deference to their betters ; the upper classes speak low, because their social training enables them to perceive that their tones would be unbearable if not restrained by culture. In America too little attention is given to the subduing of the voice in conversation ; but so long as we are able to supply England, as well as other foreign countries with *Prima Donnas* on demand, we need not feel too much distressed by English criticisms of our national pitch and volume !

Count Gorgikoff is determined to beg, buy, or steal a kiss from

Mademoiselle de Tournay. He disguises his intentions under a grandfatherly demeanour ; but we know what he means, and it is almost an insult to the young lady, though she does not seem to regard it in that light. There are two other young girls here at present, Fräulein von Hof, and Mademoiselle Armand, and the count is constantly inviting them to drive in his fine carriage, and showing them attentions in various ways, merely for the sake of enjoying Mademoiselle de Tournay's society. Frau von Hof always accompanies her daughter, and serves as *chaperon* for the whole party, so that there is no impropriety in the excursions ; but the whole house is gossiping about the count's infatuation for Mademoiselle de Tournay, and it seems to me a disagreeable and an unwise position for a young girl to be in.

Last evening, in the parlour, he amused the company with an elaborate puzzle in writing. There were questions and answers upon illuminated cards, and on a little standard in the middle of the table hung three gold rings, which were promised to the girls in case of their answering aright. I was too far from the table to see how the game was managed, but it turned out that the joke consisted in entrapping the participants into the final answer, "*a kiss*," implying a promise to redeem word by deed. Mademoiselle de Tournay was the first to discover the secret, and she laughed slyly to see her companions falling into the trap. But when her turn came she gave the answer and received her ring, which was a beautiful and valuable one, while the others were simple hoops, enclosing a small stone. Count Gorgikoff is working hard for his reward ! It must have been a good deal of trouble to prepare those cards, and the rings involved a special trip to Schneckenberg, besides their cost, which, of course, he does not consider.

Frau von Hof was not in the parlour last evening, and so did not know anything about the game until her daughter went up to bed. And Fräulein von Hof was in distress this morning because her mother said that having accepted the ring, she must fulfil the promise.

"There he is, in the arbour," exclaimed Frau von Hof, looking out of the window, "and he is old enough to be your grandfather ;

just go right up to him and give him a kiss and thank him for your pretty ring, and then it will be over and you won't have it to think of."

So the little girl ran out, and we watched her from the window. She made short work of the performance, and the count seemed satisfied, Fräulein von Hof's kisses being a matter of indifference to him. Mademoiselle Armand stoutly refused to kiss the old gentleman.

"I am alone in the world," she said, "and I do not propose to spend my time in kissing strangers."

She is an Alsatian, orphaned in the war, and placed here by relatives to study painting in Schneckenberg—a brave, quiet little girl, who can be trusted to make her way by herself.

"The count is welcome to his ring," she said, "or I will give him one of my best sketches in return for it; but I will not kiss him."

So she offered the sketch, which was graciously accepted, Mdlle. Armand's kisses being also a matter of indifference to the wily count.

There remains now only Mdlle. de Tournay as debtor—she for whom this stupendous machinery of guile and cunning was set in motion. She does not wear her ring, as the other girls do, and she looks embarrassed whenever the count comes near, his reproachful glances and taciturn manner being a sufficient proof that he is mortified by her delay.

I am sorry she allowed herself to fall into this scrape, for she cannot consider it as child's play, and the longer she postpones the penalty, the more consequence she gives to her part in the affair. It would have been better if she had left the table as soon as she perceived the drift of the game, or having stayed, if she had kissed him right before us all, as soon as he had presented her with the ring; but we cannot always have our wits about us at the right moment!

The count leaves early to-morrow morning. When I first heard

the news I supposed that chagrin at Mdlle. de Tournay's conduct had hastened his departure ; but Frau Wartheim says the countess has telegraphed that she and her daughters will arrive to-morrow evening, and their coming has occasioned the count's going. He pretends that he wants to leave his rooms for them ; but he might do that and take a smaller lodging for himself, if he were really desirous of being with his family. It is not likely that he would be willing to display his fancy for Mdlle. de Tournay before his wife, and he cannot change his feelings in a moment, and so his only refuge is in flight. Oh, what a world this is !

We missed the count from the breakfast-table ; but I think most of us considered his absence a good riddance. There was something disgusting in his fierce pursuit of Mdlle. de Tournay. She seemed unusually gay this morning ; no doubt it is a relief not to be watched and followed as she has been of late. She had the ring on her finger. I wonder how she cleared her conscience of its voluntary obligation—for it is necessary to be honest even in little things in order to feel at ease.

Frau Wartheim told me just now that Mdlle. de Tournay met Count Gorgikoff in the hall when he came out of his room to go away. She had on a lovely morning wrapper, and he took her in his arms and kissed her passionately many times. Then she returned to her room, and he went downstairs to his carriage.

That accounts for Mdlle. de Tournay's relieved look. It was not the best way to solve the dilemma ; but I do not believe that it was an understanding between her and the count. Probably after they parted last evening she thought it would be mean to keep the ring and not give the kiss, and so she made use of the only opportunity left. She is vain and coquettish ; but I am sure she has no evil thoughts, and did not realise the impropriety of

the count's demand. He is a bad man, and I am glad he is out of sight, as I trust he will soon be out of mind.

Countess Gorgikoff and her three daughters arrived this evening. The countess is a stout, elderly lady, who may have been slender and handsome in her youth ; the daughters are blooming, healthy hoydens, who scamper through the halls, and talk loud, and give little shrieks at whatever interests or astonishes them. They do not seem to think it strange that the husband and father should have left just as they were coming, and they expect to meet him in a few weeks at Vienna, and go together to spend the winter in Italy. I thought of "the changes and chances of this mortal life," when I saw the new family sitting around the parlour table—the same table which so recently held the count's elaborate game. I seemed to see his ugly face in the unconscious group, with his little sly eyes leering at Mdlle. de Tournay, and his bony hands trembling with excitement as he distributed the cards.

Our three young ladies pair off amicably with the three Russian girls, and I am sure no one will have so little tact as to tell the story of the three rings.

This morning's mail brought Robina's wedding cards. Mine and Mr. Parkhurst's were directed in her handwriting, and I have no doubt she was thinking of that scene in the dining-room when she wrote our names. I had a good cry in my room, recalling the events of the last few weeks. It seems wrong to have let her marry Mr. Mayhew, feeling as she did !

Count Romanska has returned to Poland to attend to his affairs, and his daughter is more secluded than ever since his departure. The old countess has become entirely blind, and is a great care, especially as she is of a very imperious disposition, and cannot

realise the change in the family circumstances, nor comprehend why she should not command as much attention and as many luxuries as in her prosperous days. Mademoiselle Nina invited me the other day to visit her mother, and I went the same afternoon. It was a melancholy scene ! The afflicted lady sat propped up in bed in a darkened room, her eyes being still sensitive, although the sight is gone. She was dressed in a white flannel wrapper, and a broad black band, like a nun's veil, rested on her head and fell upon her shoulders. I supposed it to be a badge of mourning, but her daughter told me that in Poland a blind person always wears such a veil, as an indication of the misfortune. I was more than ever impressed with the fascination of the countess' speech and manners. She must have wielded great influence in the brilliant society in which she formerly moved. Poor woman ! She has not yet learned to bear her sorrows with humility. She is every moment demanding some new service from her gentle daughter, and there is a nervous haste in her gestures and an impatience in her tones which must be excessively trying to her constant companions. Besides her daughter, she has an old woman as cook, and a young girl to run errands. They have given up boarding at the Pension, and now have the use of a small kitchen adjoining the corridor and opening into the garden. From my window I often see the young countess standing in the kitchen door in her white morning dress, apparently wishing to assist in the preparation of breakfast, but not knowing how to put her dainty hands to such rough usage. There is no affectation in her helplessness ; she is really incapable of struggling against adverse fate, when it takes the form of poverty. She was made to be the ornament of a drawing-room, the pride of a wealthy husband, the adored mother of high-born sons—and here she is, shut out from the world, her accomplishments rusting from disuse, her gaiety dying away under the depressing influences of her hard lot. An American girl in her circumstances would turn her knowledge of music and languages and ornamental needlework to account, thereby lightening the cares of penury, and at the same time refreshing her spirit by communica-

tion with other healthful and energetic beings. But Mademoiselle Nina knows no better way than to languish in her mother's darkened chamber, and find her only recreation in a daily walk to and from the village church. She derives comfort from her religion, I hope and believe, and her simple, unselfish pursuance of what she considers her duty is beyond all praise.

Yesterday I went to Schneckenberg to do some shopping, and after my errands were accomplished I strayed into the cathedral and spent some time examining the curious inscriptions and ornaments of the numerous antique shrines. There was no service going on just then, but a number of persons were kneeling at the Virgin's altar, and among them I was struck by the appearance of a young girl whose figure was almost enveloped in the most beautiful golden hair I ever saw. Her attitude was indicative of great self-abasement. She was lying almost prone upon the floor, and her long yellow curls fell like sunshine around her. She remained motionless, her face hidden in her hands, as long as I stayed, and I saw people looking back at her as I passed out of the door.

What was my astonishment on going down to dinner this noon to find the same young lady, yellow hair and all, opposite me at table, sitting between an elderly gentleman and lady, evidently her parents. They are Americans, from Albany, and are travelling about for the edification of this daughter, their only child, in whom their hearts are manifestly bound up. The scene in the cathedral was explained by the mother's confidences this afternoon in the garden. It seems that the family spent last winter in Rome, where the daughter came under the influence of a priest noted for the number of converts he had made from the ranks of Protestant tourists. Her parents were almost distracted when they discovered her strong leaning towards Catholicism, and they succeeded in carrying her off before she had publicly abjured the faith of her childhood. But they were in terror lest she should yield to her inclination to become a nun, and they could not pre-

vent her adherence to a course of spiritual mortification prescribed by the priest, one feature of which was the daily prostration in church before the Virgin's altar for an hour of prayer and meditation. The wily priest knew what he was about in sending her to exhibit her golden locks before the most frequented shrine, and it struck me at once that in all probability her desire to become a nun was largely influenced by an imaginary rehearsal of the public scene of renunciation of the world, when she would display the full glory of her hair before submitting it to the cruel shears. In view of this dramatic moment the silly girl loses sight of the weary hours and days and years of seclusion which must succeed that climax, and does not realise how soon the impression of her sacrifice will fade from the minds of sympathising beholders. It seems almost incredible that any sane person can be so carried away by vanity ; but it is human nature, and there is nothing else to be said.

I knew a bright girl once who fell in love with a man for nothing in the world but because he had a romantic name, and she was faithful to him through years of separation, and finally married him—and the match turned out a wretched one, as might have been expected.

Signor Morello has returned, moody and downcast, and even more adverse to society than when I first knew him. He talks freely to Frau Wartheim, who has known him from childhood, and who, although now mistress of a Pension, was formerly in a position to be on friendly terms with people as proud and grand as the Morellos. He is almost distracted at the idea of Robina as the wife of another man, and he curses the hard-heartedness of the mother and deplores the impatience of the daughter, without seeming to reflect that his own admission of the impossibility of his marrying had much to do with her hasty decision. If he had begged her to wait, or urged her to risk poverty with him, or insisted upon his ability to maintain her in comfort if not in luxury, she would have been likely to listen to him. But his apathetic acquiescence in Mrs. Beaumont's worldly arguments,

his acknowledgment that without an abundance of money it was impossible to marry, may have stung the girl's pride, as well as convinced her that wealth was the surest foundation for happiness in wedded life.

Signor Morello told Frau Wartheim that he was going to refit his yacht so that it would be a memorial of his terrible disappointment. The hull is to be painted black, the name changed from *l'Amour* to *la Mort*, and the sail is to be black with a white skull and cross-bones by way of ornament ! She begged him not to carry out such a wild whim ; she said it would scare the fishermen out of their wits to see such a craft go sailing by, and all Schneckenberg would be gossiping about it. But he said he did not care, he was miserable, and it was no matter who knew it.

An American lady and her daughter from New York have taken the rooms recently occupied by the Gorgikoffs. These Ryders appear to be very wealthy and, for some reason or other, very grand feeling people. Their meals are served in their private parlour, and they have nothing to say to anybody in the house. They dress very richly, and drive into Schneckenberg in a handsome carriage which they have hired for the time of their stay.

I received a call this morning from a German lady living in Schneckenberg, who came on a strange errand. I never heard of her before, but it seems she is acquainted with Mr. Montague, and she asserts that he engaged himself to her daughter last summer, and after leaving the country, wrote to her that he would soon return.

I think this is only another case of a misinterpretation of American friendliness by foreigners. Mr. Montague will have to be more careful, or he will get himself into serious trouble. I know of a case in Dresden where, on the strength of a young American having invited his landlady's daughter to go to the

opera with him, the family actually had engagement cards printed, and if the young man had not been possessed of unusual energy and independence of character, he would have been married in spite of himself. In that case there was probably a determination to entrap the stranger; in the present instance the intention appears to be honourable, and the lady evidently expects to be treated honourably in return.

I asked her whether her daughter had any written promise from Mr. Montague, or any letters which would go to prove an engagement between them, and she said "No." There had been no occasion for writing, as the young people had always met in Schneckenberg, and the only letter she possessed, excepting a few unimportant notes, was the one announcing his departure and his hope of a speedy return. I took some pains to explain to the lady the free and friendly relations between young people of opposite sexes in America, and the degree of flirtation which is considered admissible without implying intention of marriage.

She heard me patiently, but returned to her former argument: "An engagement is an engagement, and when a man asks a woman to marry him, the words must mean the same in every part of the world," which was, of course, undeniable.

I was glad not to be able to give her Mr. Montague's address; for as I know nothing about the people, I might be making a great deal of trouble for him in setting them on his track. But I do wish he would be more careful! He has left at least two girls miserable on his account, and I presume he never dreamed of marrying either of them.

It turns out that the Ryders are so exclusive as regards their fellow-countrymen, because they are ambitious of entering the highest foreign society. They have in some way obtained an introduction at Court, and therefore the best houses in Schneckenberg are open to them. I wonder they do not go into the city to live; but they seem to prefer this quiet house as a sleeping place, and to rest in for a few hours of each day.

Signor Morello has been officially notified that he will not be allowed to rig up his yacht according to his recent lugubrious plan. He was angry at first with Frau Wartheim because he supposed that she had betrayed him to the police ; but she declared that she had not mentioned the subject to anyone but me, and he has since found out that the report was spread by the workmen whom he had consulted. He is going to sell the yacht, as he says he shall never enjoy sailing again.

Frau Wartheim and all the permanent boarders are rejoicing because Mrs. Lester is coming. She is an American lady who has been here several times for a long sojourn, and she has now written to engage a room for the winter. Frau Wartheim is glad to be able to give her her old quarters, the attic chamber directly over my room and opposite the one Mr. Montague occupied.

Young Wartheim has come home for a visit. He seems to have recovered entirely from his foolish fancy for his aunt ; but I think he must be very susceptible, for he is already deeply enamoured of Miss Reynolds and her yellow curls, and follows her about whenever she makes her appearance in the garden. She is scornful and even rude in her manner towards him, considering him only as her landlady's son, and therefore not worthy of her acquaintance. It is true that his position seems inferior at present ; but Frau Wartheim belongs to an old and noble family, and it is only recently that circumstances have forced her to make her living by keeping a Pension. She is an accomplished woman of fine manners, and her son will have every facility for a good education. I have almost wished that the girl could regard him with favour, as a means of counteracting the religious enthusiasm which threatens to send her into a convent. It is certain that she has no vocation for such a life, and her parents are broken-hearted at the thought of losing her companionship.

Wonder of wonders ! Truth is indeed stranger than fiction, and romance has not yet died out of the world ! Signor Morello has just had a fortune left him, and by the very uncle of whom he used to speak, as likely to come to the rescue in the affair with Robina ! Mrs. Beaumont was always very sarcastic about this uncle's ability and willingness to help his nephew. I wonder what she would say now, if she were here ! I am sorry that Robina must know of this change in Morello's affairs. But the papers will soon get hold of the story, and I remember that she subscribed for the *Postbote* before leaving.

Signor Morello is going to resign his place in the Embassy and go back to Turin. He has enough money now to keep up the family palace and country seat in proper style, and he will probably fall in with the family plans and marry his wealthy cousin in due time.

Signor Morello has gone home. He told Frau Wartheim before leaving that he should never forget Robina. The other love affairs left no deep impression, he said, but this one was ineffaceable. He seemed in very low spirits. He said he presumed he should follow the way of the world, and settle down and marry, and have sons and daughters who would grow up and fall in love and break their hearts and be miserable, like himself.

A very strange thing has happened. This afternoon we heard some one screaming on the terrace, and on hurrying out to see what was the matter, we found little Miss Reynolds in an agony of distress. Some one had cut off her hair, while she lay asleep in the hammock ! More than half of her mass of golden curls was gone, and not a trace of the thief could be discovered ! We had a dreadful time trying to console the poor girl. She was almost distracted, and, unfortunately, her parents are away and will not be back for a week. She has had a habit of going to sleep under the trees on the terrace, with her glorious hair thrown over the

edge of the hammock and sweeping on the ground. Since the weather has grown cooler her mother has tried to dissuade her from lying down in the open air, but she has persisted, and to-day being almost as warm as summer, there was more temptation to gratify her vanity in that way. Some of the boarders were sure to come out and admire her curls; and this afternoon there was quite a gathering there after dinner, but one by one the company dispersed, leaving Miss Reynolds alone in the hammock with her book. And after a while she fell asleep, and then the thief came and did that wicked piece of mischief. We all think that some pedlar passing by strayed into the garden and was tempted by so good a chance to make a round sum—for such hair as that would bring a high price.

Mrs. Armstrong advises Miss Reynolds to have her head shaved. She says if the barber shaves *up* instead of *down* the hair will be almost sure to come out curly, and we all agreed that her head would look lovely covered with short, sunny curls. As it is now, she has one long thick lock left, which can be wound around her head so as to hide the disfigurement in a good degree. But this plan does not suit her, as she wants her hair to hang down, and she will probably follow Mrs. Armstrong's suggestion, and then retire to some obscure place until her curls begin to be worth looking at. I am heartily sorry for the poor girl, and yet from one point of view her loss seems like a "providence" in disguise, for I really believe that her desire for a convent life will be weakened through this mishap.

The Reynolds family went away last week, and as there was nothing noticeable about them excepting the daughter's hair, I had almost ceased to think about them, when their recent misfortune was recalled by a discovery which I made this morning in the garden. As I was walking up and down the long path, I saw something glittering in the sun under a clump of bushes just below the terrace, and on examination I found a pair of large scissors which I had often seen on Frau Wartheim's table, and

which she has been hunting for of late. It all flashed upon me in an instant. It was surely her son who cut off Miss Reynolds' hair ! He was ~~out~~ fishing that day, and he took pains in the evening to tell where he went and how long he stayed, although nobody suspected him of having been anywhere else than on the lake. He probably landed and came up to the house through the evergreen woods, instead of by the road, and finding Miss Reynolds asleep, and her hair hanging within convenient distance, he was tempted to revenge himself for her haughty behaviour. There may have been another motive more to his credit, though the deed was inexcusable. I remember that once several of the boarders were lamenting Miss Reynolds' determination to desert her parents for a convent life, and Mrs. Armstrong exclaimed :

" If she could only have a fever and lose her beautiful hair, she would soon be tired of that silly notion ! "

He probably recalled that suggestion, and when the time came resolved to do evil that good might come. I first thought of taking the scissors to Frau Wartheim, and telling her where I found them ; but a second thought convinced me that it would be better to lay them where they would be picked up by someone, and so I put them on the sill of an open cellar window at the back of the house, where no one could see me. The mischief was done. I could not prove that young Wartheim did it, and it would have made his mother uncomfortable to know that he was suspected.

I am thankful to find that as I grow older a secret does not seem so difficult to keep. And it is always better to pass over troubles which cannot be remedied.

I am glad that young Wartheim's leave of absence will soon expire. I cannot bear the sight of him since I discovered the evidence of his guilt. He must have a vindictive and a deceitful disposition to accomplish such a wrong and not betray himself afterwards.

Our Pension guests are nowadays mostly transient, and do not stay long enough to make an acquaintance with them worth while.

Mrs. Manners and Mrs. Armstrong have gone away on a tour, but expect to return for the winter ; Mrs. Beauchamp and her noisy boy have left for home, to the relief of the whole house. A more agreeable representative of her nation has taken the room next mine, and we have struck up quite a friendship, considering the many points of opposition we have to quarrel over. She is an old maid, like myself, and has her own ideas of things, as I have. She is rich and of a very good family, is well educated, and has travelled a great deal. She is full of prejudices against America, and she insists upon it that I am equally prejudiced against England ; though I am sure that my fault-finding is entirely deserved, and that hers is, for the most part, as unjust as possible. We often have a season of lively sparring, when we bring up all the hateful things we can think of about each other's country ; but we generally wind up with a laugh, and are as friendly afterwards as ever.

I never tire of looking out of my windows. The mountains are wonderfully varied in their outlines. At evening their jagged tops stand in sharp relief against the sky, and at early morning I can see distinctly all the ribs and veins in their rugged sides. There are three particularly striking points, for each of which I have my favourite time of observation.

Away up on an open ridge to the westward stands a farm-house whose windows reflect the first beams of the rising sun. It forms so bright a contrast to the mists and shadows of our valley that I love to get up early and watch for the illumination.

Then at evening the long rocky wall to the north is all aglow in sunset.

And a little later Jupiter rises fair and clear above the sharp form of the Tanteberg, and when the moon bathes the whole landscape in enchanted light the scene is perfect !

An arrival to-day which promises to be an agreeable acquisition

to my English friend and myself—Count and Countess Urwald, an extremely interesting pair.

He is a noble-looking man, not more than forty-five years old, I should think, although his hair and moustache are quite grey. She is evidently a good deal younger—a tall, slender woman, with a sweet face and pleasant manners.

I had a long talk with the countess this forenoon. Miss Cavendish and I undertook to show the strangers our favourite walk through the woods to the waterfall, and on the way back the countess preferred to sit down and rest, while the count went up the hill with Miss Cavendish, in search of a wild flower which she discovered in that region yesterday. The count is a good botanist, to the delight of my English friend, who is always hunting for strange plants. So I stayed with the countess, who was very chatty, and told me a great deal about her own life and her home on the Rhine.

She and her husband belong to two very old noble families, neighbours for centuries. Their estates join, and will be united in this pair, in case of their having children. They have been married ten years now and are still childless. The countess owned to me that it was the desire of her life to present her husband with an heir, although her husband seemed quite indifferent with regard to the subject.

"Probably it is because he is so happy with you alone," I ventured to suggest.

She gave me a grateful glance, and with a smile and a blush replied :

"Yes, we are very happy. We are like two children, only we never quarrel as children do."

"Then don't worry any more about a third child," I exclaimed. "The old Hindu poets, you know, consider the love between husband and wife the best and most satisfactory love of all, and their conclusions were generally very wise. Be thankful that this love is yours, and let the estates go to whom they will!"

That was my advice. I can't bear to see people who might be happy always pining for something they do not possess. If this woman knew what it is to be a lonely old maid she would never look beyond her husband's affection for content !

We have just returned from a walk to Neffenhall. It is a beautiful road, first along the lake shore, with the mountains all around, then past the picturesque chapel of St. Florian, and through the pine woods to the meadows, and then into the woods again.

We took coffee at Neffenhall and came home at our leisure, after the heat of the day was over. Count and Countess Urwald are very agreeable companions. They seem entirely free from the little singularities of manner and habit which makes intercourse with Germans sometimes rather difficult and puzzling. I suppose it is because they have travelled so much that they act so much like everybody else. The countess makes no more of sitting on a sofa than as though it were a chair, and goes in and out of a room without any thought of precedence. And when we are walking, we all go along just as it happens. The count is very attentive to his wife, and they often exchange glances of sympathy and words of pleasant reminiscence over anything particularly beautiful which we see ; but they are never exclusive in their words or ways, and they divide their attentions between us in a manner which proves them to be polite as well as sociable. The count often leads Miss Cavendish a long chase after flowers, and the countess is apt to choose me for her companion when she lingers in farm-yards to talk with the peasants ; but then again the count comes to me to inquire about America and to solve his difficulties as to English idioms, and the countess and Miss Cavendish are always teaching each other some new stitch in embroidery or crochet work.

We have had five days of lovely weather, without a drop of rain

or a puff of wind, and have been making good use of our opportunities for seeing the show places in this vicinity. It is well that we have been so industrious in our walking, for Count Urwald has just received a summons to Vienna on business, and will probably be gone a week or more. The countess goes with him, so we two shall fall back into our former quiet ways, I suppose.

We were alone only a few hours after all. When we came down to supper we found two ladies at our end of the table, Americans, as they made haste to tell us, though I knew it before they spoke. Only Parisian and American ladies know exactly how to adapt themselves to the fashions, and there was nothing French in the looks and manners of the strangers.

We spent the evening together in the parlour. Mrs. Baxter and her daughter seemed glad of a chance to speak freely in their native tongue, and they gave us an amusing account of the numerous mishaps of their journey, arising from their ignorance of German. The mother is a pretty woman, small and slender, with black eyes and hair, but with a fairer skin and less striking features than her daughter. The contrast appears to extend to their characters also. The young lady evidently possesses good intellect and abundant energy, and betrays a consciousness of her superiority in remorseless interruptions and contradictions of her mother's remarks.

The Baxters have taken the upper chambers of the little house. They would have preferred rooms in this building, but there were none vacant. I should think they would enjoy the quiet and independence of the cottage. But Mrs. Baxter is afraid it will be too dull for her daughter. And when I tried to reassure her by saying that so young a girl could find amusement anywhere, she replied, "Oh, but though she is so young she has been accustomed to a great deal of society."

She then went on to tell me how many beaux the girl had had

already, to say nothing of one distinct offer, and another affair which came very near being serious. The offer was refused; but they had quite a harrowing time before the matter was settled. We were walking towards Neffenhall when she told me all this, and I looked at the young girl going on in advance with Miss Cavendish, and thought what a pity it was that she should have been allowed to begin her heart-histories so early. One little incident related by her mother gave me a clue to the secret of this precocity. Speaking of the desperate love of the young man who made the offer, she said that from the moment he had kissed her daughter he knew that she was the one he wanted for his wife. I turned and looked at her in astonishment.

"How came he to kiss her?" I asked.

"Oh," she answered, "we were together, a party of us. His sister was along too, and we all kissed each other 'Good-night.' He kissed me and I kissed him, just as Jessie did. Why, you don't think there was any harm in it?" she asked, in a wondering tone.

"The sequel does not surprise me any more," I replied. "Almost any girl can have offers while she is in short dresses if she goes about letting young men kiss her, and if you want to keep her from such experiences, I should think you would be more careful."

I know it sounded rather blunt, but I was provoked at her imprudence; for she had told me before that all this happened on the journey through England, and they had never seen nor heard of the young man until they met him on the steamer.

We turned back at the head of the lake. Miss Jessie complained of being tired, and her mother became very anxious about her. Miss Cavendish told me afterwards that the girl did not seem interested in anything around her, and would not talk about anything but the "fun" she had had with her young companions at home. I pity an only child. There is great excuse to be made for almost inevitable conceit and selfishness. But Mrs. Baxter worries too much about this daughter of hers, who is, in my opinion, suffering only from too little occupation of mind and

body. Her education has been neglected, or rather, disastrously interrupted through fears for her health, and her nerves have been weakened by the excitement of late hours, and dancing, and flirtations. The mother's present plan is to put her into a private school in or near Paris, and this summer tour is to prepare her delicate system for the demands of the coming winter.

The countess came back late last evening, after we had gone to our rooms. Her husband's business required that he should go on to Trieste, and so they both thought it would be better for her to return here. She surprised us in the parlour after breakfast, and seemed glad to be in our quiet Pension again. We introduced our new acquaintances to her, and, after talking together in the parlour a little while, we all started off to spend the morning under the trees near the waterfall. We had told the Baxters about the Urwalds before, and they had been quite eager for their return. The conversation this forenoon was entirely in English. The countess speaks it very well, much better than I supposed, as she prefers speaking German when we are alone with her. And the Baxters had on their very best manners. Jessie was all gentleness towards her mother, and both were full of sweet deference towards the countess. They rather ignored us; but, as the countess was as attentive as ever, and we took our share in the conversation, no one but ourselves would have noticed the difference.

The countess is very much pleased with my countrywomen, and I do not wonder at it. They are really charming, when one considers them only in the light of occasional companions for hours of relaxation. And they are so handsome, and so well-dressed besides. Their enthusiastic admiration of the countess is, of course, agreeable to her, though she is not at all vain. Miss Cavendish laughs about it, and says it is only another instance of the American fondness for titles. No doubt the countess' rank has something to do with their devotion. But I think it is the novelty of the thing that attracts them; for

certainly there is nothing in the present surroundings of the Urwalds to strike the Republican mind with awe. They live here just like everybody else ; the countess has not even a maid with her, and I infer from what she says that money is not very abundant in their tribe. But to Americans, fresh from our new country, it is "like a story" to meet a beautiful lady with a title several hundred years old, and to hear her tell about the castle on the Rhine, where she was born, and where she expects to live all her days.

They ask innumerable questions about the place, and show so much interest in all that concerns the countess, that she can scarcely help meeting their advances without some show of friendship. She said to-day, after a long cross-examination by Miss Jessie as to the situation of various apartments in the castle :

"You must come and see it for yourself. You will perhaps be travelling through the Rhine country another season, and I should be pleased to show you my house."

And Miss Jessie, with a gratified glance at her mother, replied :

"Oh, thank you ; we shall be sure to come."

And this evening, when we were all in the countess' room, she leaning back in her easy-chair, and Jessie sitting on a stool at her feet, she said :

"I wish Hermann were here to help make the time pass pleasantly for you."

Her saying so is a proof that she really likes the girl, for Hermann is her husband's nephew, and the heir to their joint estates in case of their dying childless. She is, no doubt, looking out for a suitable wife for this important personage, and it was a great compliment to Miss Jessie to be judged worthy of his acquaintance.

The young lady seemed properly gratified by the suggestion, and began to make inquiries concerning the looks and occupation of the young man, her fancy, doubtless, running on through an infinity of romantic possibilities which another season might bring to realisation.

"Miss Jessie will find being a German countess rather differ-

ent from what she expects," said Miss Cavendish to me as we were talking over things in my room. "And I doubt whether the countess would be satisfied with a successor so entirely ignorant of the useful arts as this damsel is! Only this morning I heard her tell, or rather order, her mother to mend her gloves for her. And her mother did it, too!"

"The mother is more to blame than the daughter," I answered. "And I must say this for American girls. I have never yet seen one who could not turn her hand to any kind of work in case of necessity. If our young friend should marry Count Hermann, she would soon beat them all at knitting stockings and making *sauer-kraut*!"

I always defend the Baxters when Miss Cavendish pounces upon them, for I consider it in the light of England *versus* America; but I see enough to criticise in their ways. The truth is, my powers of observation have been so sharpened by my former experience as a school-teacher, that I seem to have eyes all round my head whenever girls are in sight. And it isn't crabbed, old-maidish severity which makes me sit in judgment on the young. I really feel a deep and tender interest in their development. I grieve over the mistakes of their elders in their training. I pity the poor things who must be punished in some way or other for every folly they commit, and who will see cause to repent of every defect of character they allow to remain uncorrected. I can't tell, of course, how blind I might have been as a mother, but I know that as it is, I can see through a young girl as though she were a stick of transparent candy! And there never was a truer word, in or out of Scripture, than Solomon's assurance that "*childhood and youth are vanity.*"

I don't know what Mrs. Baxter is thinking of, to speak so carelessly as she does before her daughter! She talks about everything under the sun. One would think she had no more morals than a Hottentot, to hear her tell of all sorts of social scandals which have come to her knowledge at home and abroad! Only

this morning she was declaring to me that there is a romance going on in the quiet German family occupying the little table next ours at dinner. She is convinced that the husband and father of six children does not care half so much for his wife as he does for his wife's pretty sister, and she knows by the sister's demure manner that there is "something between them !"

And all the while she was holding forth, Miss Jessie sat beside us with a roguish smile on her pretty lips, as though she, too, could say a good deal in confirmation of the story. It is awful ! What safeguard is there for this wilful, passionate daughter, when she remembers how lightly her mother disposes of the most sacred ties, in her interpretation of the conduct of her neighbours ?

When I was sixteen years old it never would have entered my head that a married man could be in love with his wife's sister ! As for this German family, there is not the slightest ground for suspicion so far as I can see, and I don't believe that anybody but Mrs. Baxter has imagined such a complication.

I do wish that Miss Cavendish would not insist as strongly as she does that Americans are crazy after titles ; or, rather, I wish that she were not able to bring up so many examples in proof of her assertion. And, dear me ! haven't I seen enough myself ? If people over here could only know and believe that the best and wisest Americans do not feel so ; that among us there is a great body of true Republicans who, equally free from ignorant prejudice and servile admiration as regards the high-born of other lands, are able to overlook and see through all the false distinctions of society, and recognise talent and worth wherever these exist !

I returned last night from a stay of ten days with American friends at Innsbruck, who arrived there unexpectedly and telegraphed for me to join them. It was a pleasant visit ; but I am glad after all to get back to the Pension. Miss Cavendish was the

only one aware of my arrival, and we had a long talk before going to bed.

The house has filled up during my absence. The engaged rooms are now all occupied ; but the new-comers are not likely to affect the movements of our little party.

The count came back two days after I went away. Miss Cavendish had a whole budget to tell about him. It seems that he met the Baxters last year and helped them out of some difficulty. There had been an inundation which had washed away a part of the railroad where they were travelling, and they were all turned out into the water in the night. The accident was not a serious one, but everybody was wet and uncomfortable. The count flew around and helped everyone he met, and amongst others the Baxters. He actually carried them in his arms over a narrow plank which they were afraid to cross. They could not speak a word of either German or French, and he could not speak much English, and in the hurry and confusion they lost sight of him and had no opportunity even to thank him for his kindness. So they never knew who he was nor where he came from, until they met him here. Of course, there was a great time ! They were overflowing with gratitude, and Jessie has been ever since exclaiming, "*How romantic the whole thing is !*" For my part, I honour the count more than ever, for Germans in general are not apt to be very chivalrous towards women in distress. Miss Cavendish says it is really ridiculous to see how the two run after and hang around the Urwalds, especially the count ! When they all go out walking, Miss Jessie takes her place at his side, and scarcely looks at or speaks to anybody but him. And Mrs. Baxter devotes herself to the countess. Miss Cavendish says she should feel quite *de trop*, if it were not that the Urwalds are as attentive to her as ever, or rather, as the others will allow them to be. She is glad I have come back, as now there will be three pairs of us. I tell her that I have no notion of permitting the pairs to be always arranged after the Baxters' design ! Before they came, the count and countess were scrupulously polite about dividing their attentions between us, and they no doubt prefer to be equally friendly to us

all. Another innovation. Miss Jessie gives a kiss all around when she bids "Good-night." She never used to kiss the countess before the count came, and I am sure she never showed any disposition before to kiss Miss Cavendish or me.

It really is too absurd, the way that girl goes on, and is allowed to go on, with the count! She is hovering around him continually, taking hold of his hands, leaning on his shoulder, pulling his moustache, smoothing his hair, to say nothing of kissing him whenever she can find an excuse. He bears it all in a quiet, friendly way, and once in a while pats her cheek in return; but he never makes advances himself, and sometimes appears not to notice her manoeuvres. The countess looks on serenely; but you never can tell what these thoroughly trained society people are thinking about. My own opinion is, that husband and wife compare notes when they are alone together and enjoy many a laugh over the manners of outside barbarians. For my part, I looked astonished on purpose, when the girl was so extraordinarily affectionate last evening. Her mother noticed it, and this morning when we happened to be alone in the arbour, she said:

"I saw you watching Jessie last night. I hope you don't think there is anything improper in her kissing the count. She is such a child, and he is a married man, and old enough to be her father!"

"She is not a child," I answered. "She is a woman; she is nearly sixteen years old, and very forward for her age in some respects. And the count is not an old man, and is no relation of hers, merely a very recent acquaintance."

"Well, I am sure he looks upon her as a child," she persisted.

"I presume he does. But if you notice, you will see that he never takes such liberties himself, he only accepts them from her, and does not generally return them. Her kisses will not do him any harm, but it is not a good practice for her."

Mrs. Baxter was about to reply when Jessie suddenly appeared before us flushed and excited.

"Have you seen the count?" she asked, all out of breath.

"No. What is the matter?"

"Nothing, only I saw him starting out to walk and I want to go with him. I'm tired of staying in the house."

"We are all going to Neffenhall this afternoon," I observed.

"You don't want to get tired now."

"Oh, pshaw, I sha'n't be tired. There he is!" she cried, and hurried down the lane to the road.

"I am very glad Jessie has a chance to run about," said Mrs. Baxter. "She found it so dull at first that I thought I should have to go away. But now she is as bright and cheerful as possible, and I can see that the air is doing her a great deal of good."

I could have reminded Mrs. Baxter that her daughter had had a chance to run about with us every day, but had often preferred to stay at home, and had always complained of fatigue when walking. But knowing the lady to be impervious to argument, I wisely refrained from commenting upon the girl's change of mood and its obvious cause.

We went to Neffenhall, and, as it turned out, exactly in the order described by Miss Cavendish. I made up my mind beforehand to do my share towards keeping the party together and effecting now and then a general change of companions, but Jessie was too shrewd for me. She began by challenging the count to a race down the lane, and that put them so far in advance that we did not catch up to them till we reached the end of the lake. He stopped several times and appeared to wait for us; but she managed to lure him on, and when we finally came up she sat down on a log a little way off and said she must rest, and there she stayed until we had passed on, and of course the count was obliged to wait and walk with her. Then she must needs stop at the spring and drink and play with the water in the trough, talking busily all the while and glancing up every moment at the count, who stood straight and soldier-like beside her, awaiting her orders to move on. Even Mrs. Baxter seemed to think at last

that her daughter had kept the company waiting long enough, and she called out :

"Come along, Jessie ! Don't stop in that barn-yard ; you'll be all covered with fleas !"

The chapel was locked, and the count went over to the inn for the key, Jessie running after him and slipping her hand through his arm in the most confidential manner.

It was the same thing in the church. She waited near the door to see in what order we would proceed, and as soon as the count stopped a moment behind the rest to examine a picture, she darted to his side and stuck close to him all the rest of the time. The chapel was rather chilly, and when we came out the countess proposed going over to the inn to have some hot coffee.

Nobody was in the room when we entered, and we sat down at one of the long tables to wait for our coffee. It was curious to see how anxiously Jessie watched for a chance to seat herself beside the count, and how perfectly happy she seemed to be when she finally nestled down at his left hand, he being at the end of the bench, so that there was no danger of a neighbour at his right. His wife was opposite, and I saw him give her a merry glance, which she answered with a half-suppressed smile, as she took her seat.

The countess and Mrs. Baxter were the only ones who took coffee, the rest of us preferring beer. The quiet and refreshment were very pleasant ; but Miss Jessie found the general conversation tedious, I suppose, for pretty soon she struck up a complaint that the beer had gone to her head, and she covered her face with her hands and began to weave backwards and forwards, as though unable to hold herself up. She evidently wanted the count to put his arm around her and let her lean her head on his shoulder ; but he didn't take the hint. As soon as we got up to go away she was all right, and could walk as straight as anybody.

Just as we came out of the field into the road, an empty cart was passing by, and the man asked if we would ride. We were glad of the chance, as we felt rather tired ; Jessie, especially, thought it would be great fun ; but on discovering that the count

intended walking home, she changed her mind and stayed behind with him. I know she was ready to drop, for she is not accustomed to walk much, and she was out nearly all the morning, besides the trip this afternoon; but I suppose the count's companionship was a sufficient cure, for she came back quite radiant, and paid no attention to her mother's calls from the balcony, so long as the count stayed below in the yard. When he went into the house she hurried to the cottage and presently came down to supper dressed more prettily than ever, in a low-necked dress and with an extra singe on her front hair.

It is going to be a serious business! If the count were a young, unmarried man, everybody would say that the girl was "setting her cap" for him, and the fact that he is married and comparatively old makes no difference in the quality of her conduct. She is really beginning to be "dead in love" with him, with that blind, instinctive passion which is a mere matter of sex and has nothing to do with soul. If her mother had a particle of common-sense, she would put a stop to it at once; but she hasn't. And what little influence she has all goes the wrong way. Only last evening she was teasing Jessie about having been in love a few months ago with an American artist they met in Paris. It seems they boarded in the same house, and Jessie used to go up to his room and stay for hours learning, or pretending to learn, to draw. The girl denied having been in love with him, wishing, I suppose, to forget past experiences, now that she has a new fancy; but the mother kept insisting that she was for a time desperately in love, and made her bring her album to show me some poetry he had written by way of farewell. The verses were all about *kissing*, and seemed to me rather insulting than complimentary. It was a proof that she had gone on with him in the same free way that she is endeavouring to practise with the count.

Mrs. Baxter is continually boasting of her daughter's great powers of facination. She says almost every young man they meet is smitten with Jessie. But there is a very simple reason

for that. The girl is pretty—I don't want to deny it—and there is something very attractive at first in her easy ways; perhaps, too, men do not miss the modesty in her manners, nor regret its absence as much as women do; but one thing is certain, any girl can have a crowd of silly men and bad men around her who is willing to attract by being familiar. Jessie is too young to know the real meaning of what she does; her conduct is dictated mainly by her own half-awakened emotions; but still there is in it sufficient method to show that she has begun to calculate the effect of various expressions of feeling upon the other sex. If she goes on as she has begun, she will either lose her character outright, or she will become a hardened coquette. I don't know which is the more deplorable fate. It is so strange that her mother does not perceive these tendencies and take pains to nip them in the bud!

The countess has met with an accident which threatens to keep her confined to her room for several days. She slipped on the stairs this morning and sprained her ankle, and the doctor says she must not attempt to walk for a week at least. She has established herself comfortably on the sofa with a little table full of books close at hand, and seems disposed to accept the situation in a philosophic spirit. The count is more disturbed than she is about it. He stayed with her almost all day; but she says she is not going to allow him to shut himself up in that fashion—he must go out with us as much as ever. We all spent the evening in her room. I could not help being struck by the contrast between Jessie's indifference to the countess at present, and her devotion to her before the count came. Then she was always sitting at her feet, or leaning over her chair, or smoothing her hair, and now she almost ignores her existence. This evening, when a show of particular interest would have been quite in place, she merely went up to the sofa and asked her how she did, and said it was too bad that she had hurt herself, and then she was off like a flash to the farther window where the count was sitting,

and there she stayed and kept him there as long as she could. Afterwards, when he joined our group, she insisted on his sitting in the great arm-chair, and she put a footstool before it and drew her own chair just opposite his and put her feet on the footstool too, and then she seemed satisfied. Anyone would have thought that the count was the invalid, instead of his wife !

The moonlight was so pleasant that nobody wanted a lamp, and we sat and talked and enjoyed ourselves very much. Jessie said very little. She seemed to find enough to occupy her mind in looking at the count's face by moonlight. By-and-bye he got up, and after wandering about the room a few moments, went out upon the balcony. We were discussing knitting-work just then, and the countess lit a candle and opened the drawer to take out a piece of lace which she had just finished.

"Now, Miss Jessie," she said, "you can see the effect of the stitch you wanted to learn."

But Jessie pretended not to hear, and hastily pushing back her chair, she was out on the balcony in an instant. I sat where I could see all that went on. The count was sitting by the railing smoking, and Jessie perched herself upon the corner of the table close beside him. She seemed to be in a sentimental mood. She would throw her head back every little while to look at the moon, and then stoop to say something in a low tone to the count, enforcing her remarks by little pats upon his arm or shoulder, and occasionally venturing to arrange a stray lock of his hair. He smoked and chatted in his usual manner, and appeared not to notice her advances, and as soon as his cigar was finished he rose to return to the room. She followed, and their appearance was the signal for our departure. When we bade the countess "Good-night," Jessie kissed her, and then turned and kissed the count. The design was too evident—after neglecting the countess all the evening, especially after the rudeness about the knitting !

I have often been quite eloquent over the charm of *unconventionality* in the manners of Americans. I like to see people

original, individual in their ways ! But I confess now that I can see wisdom in the cut-and-dried rules of polite society. After all, the majority of persons cannot be trusted to follow their feelings in their general behaviour, and, in a mixed company, better a little stiffness, or even a little insincerity, than embarrassing favouritism or insulting neglect.

It is now nearly a week since the countess sprained her ankle. She will soon be able to walk, though she will probably have to be careful all winter, and the long tramps we planned earlier in the season must be given up. I am sure I hope she will be out soon ; for her presence will be some check upon the Baxters. They take possession of the count in a thorough-going manner wonderful to behold ! Of course he cannot shut himself up in his wife's chamber all the time, and she does not expect it. But I sometimes query whether she knows how often Mrs. Baxter calls him up into her room, and how constantly Jessie is tagging at his heels out of doors. They make capital out of their ignorance of German, and rush to him for help in a thousand real or pretended emergencies. They are always wanting something out of the shops at Schneckenberg, and Jessie and the count must do all the errands. He wants to walk, and has no objection to a companion, and Jessie displays a wonderful zeal in learning German, and he likes to teach, and is also eager to learn English, and so it goes. I have watched him carefully, and I am convinced that he looks upon her only as a child, and has no idea that she is so bewitched with him. Yesterday I was at Mrs. Baxter's with a German lady in the house who wanted to call on her, and while we were there the count and Jessie came in. They had been to Schneckenberg to get a pair of strong boots for Jessie to tramp about the country in ; her foot-gear heretofore having been that of most American girls—fancy boots of the finest leather, and fitting as tightly as a glove. We talked to her, at first in vain, about it ; but I think she must have suffered tortures in her long walks with the count, and several times he has refused to let her

go with him because the roads were too muddy ; so she has found it better policy to be armed and equipped for all occasions, and a few days ago she proposed of her own accord to be measured by a shoemaker at Schneckenberg, and yesterday they brought the boots home. Such a time as she made about them ! She must have tried them on already at the shoemaker's to see whether they fitted ; but that was not enough. She went into the bedroom and came out with one new boot on, the other foot being adorned with her very prettiest Paris kid, and she went up to the count, and pulling back her dress, called his attention to the contrast, and pouted coquettishly when he harangued in favour of the calfskin. Her mother looked around and laughed at the size and shape of the new boot, and then turned to her guests again, and Jessie beckoned the count across the room and began a complaint in a half-laughing, half-crying tone which required a long process of mutual examination of the form and fit of the obnoxious boot before she would be reconciled. He must feel *here* how broad the toe is, and *there* how flat the instep looks, and *above* how it does not come high enough over the ankle, and how it is not scalloped around the top ! And the amiable, unsuspecting count bent over the pretty foot and pinched here and there and above, as directed, expostulating in favour of ample space and secure protection from the wet, quite oblivious the while of the excitement of the designing little flirt, who stood with flushed cheeks and blazing eyes enjoying the unusual contact.

Oh ! if *I* only had the training of that girl wouldn't I shut down on all such demonstrations !

Another favourite trick of hers whenever the count is in the room is to let down her hair. Of course she cannot easily find an excuse for this performance anywhere but at home, and I am amused to see how regularly it takes place on the occasion of a visit from the count. His object in coming is always to escort her somewhere, and the minute he comes in she begins to fidget about. Pretty soon she takes down her braids and unweaves them, and spreads her hair over her shoulders and draws her fingers through it and holds it up to the light, and goes through all sorts

of manoeuvres to attract his attention. She always pretends that her head aches, or that the hair-pins pull, or that the braids are done up too high for her hat ; but, of course, if her hair really needed alteration she could go into the bedroom and arrange it and say nothing. Somehow or other she has got it into her head that there is a fascination about long loosely-flowing hair, and her main object in life just at present is to fascinate the count. I often wonder that he does not see through her arts ; but I suppose his very experience as a man of the world blinds him to the symptoms in this uncommon case. He does not expect such maturity of feeling in so young a girl, and he has not been accustomed to so much freedom of manner in a respectable girl, and so the real meaning of her conduct is lost upon him thus far.

Our walks nowadays are not particularly interesting. Miss Cavendish and I have to content ourselves with Mrs Baxter, whose silliness is often oppressive in its lack of variety. She chatters constantly about her personal and family affairs, harping mostly upon her daughter's manifold attractions, and the *furor* she is likely to create when she appears as a *debutante* in society. The girl meanwhile marches on with the count and manages to keep too far away for us to overhear their conversation, or for him to take part in ours. When we first start out he walks sometimes beside one and sometimes beside another of us ; but Jessie soon contrives to get him all to herself. She challenges him to a run, or she discovers some wonderful flower, or curious bug, and screams out for him to come and see. When we sit down to rest she is evidently in distress until she has succeeded in placing herself close beside him and as far as possible from everybody else, and whenever we stop to admire a view or examine some object near at hand, she listens to every word he speaks and keeps her eyes fixed upon him as though he were an oracle, but pays not the slightest attention to anything the rest of us say.

Yesterday we all stopped on a bridge to look at some young trout in the water. Jessie became quite excited watching them,

and for a wonder forgot to keep track of the count's movements. He walked on with her mother, and I followed. We had gone some distance when Jessie suddenly missed us, and without a word to Miss Cavendish, who was waiting for her, she ran as fast as she could and caught up with the count, snuggling up to him under his umbrella as though she had been separated from him a year. I could not help saying,

"Did you leave Miss Cavendish to come alone?"

But she never takes a hint of that kind, and her mother always looks annoyed if anybody finds fault with her phoenix of a daughter. So I waited until Miss Cavendish came up, and then we kept behind the others the rest of the way.

Mrs. Baxter has tried several times to walk with the count and Jessie. Perhaps she sees that the girl's conduct is rather too particular, or perhaps she wants the pleasure of his society herself; but whatever may be her reason, Jessie manoeuvres to throw her off, and she soon comes back to us.

The evenings we usually spend in the countess's parlour. Sometimes the count is not there. He goes to a hotel in Schneckenberg to visit one of the gentlemen staying there, and then we ladies are alone. Jessie takes but little interest in our conversation. She does not even ask questions about the family castle on the Rhine, and she has no longer any curiosity about Hermann. She wanders about the room, examining the little ornaments upon the table, and only brightens up when the countess shows her something which was a present from the count. Any such object she holds in her hand a long time, and looks at very carefully and shows to her mother with expressive glances. It is just as though she were imagining herself the recipient of the pretty love-tokens. When the count comes home before we take our leave Jessie rushes to meet him at once, and entices him out into the balcony; or if he does not choose to go she calls him to the farther window, or sits down close beside him and directs her talk exclusively to him. The countess is evidently beginning to take notice of her conduct, which seems to puzzle her, as well it

may. She is not in the habit of seeing girls fall in love with married men old enough to be their fathers !

The countess was able to go with us this afternoon as far as the waterfall. We walked slowly, she leaning on her husband's arm. It was curious to see how jealous Jessie was of his attentions to his wife ! And it was still more amusing to watch her while the count was talking with her mother, when we were sitting under the tree to rest. The two were discussing something about religion (Mrs. Baxter is a Presbyterian, and likes to stir up the differences between Catholics and Protestants once in a while), and Jessie was greatly disturbed about it. The count took it all very good-naturedly, and Mrs. Baxter allowed personal feeling to conquer doctrinal prejudice so far as to wind up the controversy by saying,

"Well, count, I hope we shall meet you in heaven !"

"Yes, indeed," cried Jessie, adding in a low tone, with her eager eyes fixed upon the count's face, "*or it will not be heaven to me !*"

On starting to return, the countess said she could walk very well without help, and we went across the meadow in a group, excepting Mrs. Baxter and the count, who lingered behind, engaged in a new discussion. Jessie was very uneasy over this new departure, and her anxiety took the unusual form of sympathy with the countess, whom she has lately treated with a neglect almost amounting to rudeness.

She sidled up to her, looking into her face with dumb anguish whenever the voices of the disputants sounded from the height where they were tarrying, and now and then she would speak a few words with an inflection which seemed to say,

"*He has deserted us both ! We are suffering together !*"

She entirely ignored Miss Cavendish and me during our progress down the hill, and she deserted the countess as soon as the party came together in the woods. There happened to be a large and very wicked-looking worm creeping along in the grass beside the

path, and the count began to worry it with his cane. It doubled itself up and bit at the stick, and acted as though it would like to bite us all. The countess said,

“I wouldn’t irritate the poor thing !”

And the count stopped instantly. But Jessie cried out :

“Oh, yes, I want to see it fight !” and she kept the count working at the creature until we got tired of watching the sport and went on, leaving them behind.

It was her manner more than her words which attracted my notice. She showed plainly that she wanted to uphold the count against the countess, to encourage him in everything he might choose to do, and to oppose anybody who should venture to differ from him.

A little farther on the countess found some unusually beautiful specimens of the wild forget-me-not. She waited until the count came up and showed them to him, calling upon him to admire the depth of the colour, and then she came back to us with the flowers still in her hand. Jessie had stood by impatient while the couple were talking, and as soon as the interview was over she ran back to the spot where the countess had picked the flowers, and soon returned with a bunch of forget-me-nots done up with a daisy or two and a spray of feathery grass into a pretty little bouquet, which she proceeded ostentatiously to fasten into the count’s button-hole, with an air which seemed to say,

“See how selfish the countess is with her flowers ! This is the way I would treat you if *I* were your wife !” But, as everybody knows, forget-me-nots fade so quickly that they are of no value in a bouquet. The countess let hers drop in a few minutes, and the count’s were all wilted before we reached the house. I was glad to see that he did not wear them when he came down to supper.

Perhaps it seems as though I was rather severe upon the girl in accusing her of trying to supplant the countess in her husband’s affections. But it really looks like it. And I have heard

both her and her mother say things which proved that at least the idea had entered their heads of what might happen if the count were a widower.

The other night it rained when we got up to go away, and, as Jessie had nothing but a thin shawl to wear across the yard, the countess insisted upon her wearing *her* waterproof cloak. The count helped put it on, and she looked up at him and said :

" People will take me for the countess ! "

And she said it with a glance and an emphasis which convinced me that she was imagining herself in his wife's place and wanted him to imagine it too.

I bless every day the differences in customs and manners which prevent these Germans from understanding the Baxters as thoroughly as Miss Cavendish and I do !

Mrs. Baxter, I am sure, sees that her daughter is madly in love with the count, and is well satisfied to have it so, as it makes the girl willing to stay in this quiet place. Jessie's health is improving rapidly through the unusual amount of exercise in the open air, and the excitement of her feelings no doubt gives her new energy for the time ; though I am afraid she will suffer by-and-bye from the premature awakening of such strong emotions. Suffer she certainly will in her character. Vanity and selfishness are growing like weeds in her disposition, and maidenly reserve is disappearing fast, if, indeed, it ever began to develop. The common courtesies of society are ignored in such an education ; the gratification of personal desire is the only aim.

I declare, it makes me shudder sometimes to see that girl walk off with the count, leaving us to come on as we can ! There is in her every movement such over-abundance of self, such utter disregard of the rights and pleasures of others !

Mrs. Baxter often complains that when her daughter takes a notion into her head she can do nothing with her. This I can

well believe. The girl is wilful and obstinate by nature, and her mother is the last person to succeed in managing such a character. She is so silly, so vacillating ! And, moreover, she flatters Jessie so egregiously when in a good humour with her that her fault-finding at other times loses all its force.

Childhood and youth are vanity !

It is madness to trust to a girl's good sense in cases where her feelings come into play. A prudent mother, a wise father, ought to be always near at hand, and the more true friends the better, while a maid is growing up !

The count and countess have had a visit from a young German niece and ward of the count, who was travelling under the charge of her governess to join her parents at Vienna. Her behaviour was in strong contrast to that of Miss Jessie. She was, perhaps, a little too prim, but that seems a virtue, after the lawlessness we have been witnessing of late. She always got up when we came into the room, and she was wearisomely particular as regards giving us seats on the sofa and precedence in going through doors ; but it was refreshing to see a young person mindful of the claims of superior age. She seemed very fond of her uncle, but was not at all free in her manners towards him, nor was he familiar in his treatment of her.

The last night of her stay she happened to be in the summer-house with Jessie when we all passed by. They saw us through the vine leaves, and the stranger called out cheerfully :

“ Good-evening, Aunt Frieda ! ”

While Jessie exclaimed, “ Oh, Count Urwald ! ” in a pathetic tone, as though deploring her temporary loss of his society.

I thought that little incident very characteristic of both parties. The carefully-trained, modest German girl instinctively addressed herself to her feminine relative ; the untrained, coquettish American girl ignored her neighbours of her own sex, and claimed the notice of the man.

Fräulein Urwald went away the next morning, and Jessie seemed very glad to have her go. Her presence was a restraint and a hindrance, it having been taken for granted that the two young persons would enjoy themselves together, and Jessie, with all her boldness, not venturing to desert the stranger and fasten herself upon the count, as she does when we are alone.

She appears disposed to make up for lost time, however. This afternoon she came up to the countess' parlour while I was there, and, without preface or apology, marched up to the count and said :

"Don't you want to take a walk?"

He seemed rather astonished at her lack of manners, and replied :

"Do you mean that you want to go after the shawl you left at Neffenhall?"

"Yes," she answered quickly.

"Very well, I will go with you," he said. And they went. I was sorry that he spoke as he did ; for, though he only meant to smooth over her rudeness, she may have taken it as a plan on his part to secure her company for a long walk. He happened to know that the rest of us did not intend walking ; but *she* did not know it, and her impertinence in singling him out, without so much as asking us whether we would go, was too marked to be passed over.

After they were gone, I told the countess that she must not judge of the manners of all American girls by this specimen, that this was an aggravated case of early independence, too frequent in our country, but by no means universal. She said little in reply, but enough to show me that she is not pleased with Miss Jessie's high-handed way of sacrificing everything and everybody to her own pleasure.

This evening I happened to be alone with Jessie in the dining-room. I came late to supper, and she was hanging about because the count had not yet returned from Schneckenberg. It was so good an opportunity that I could not let it pass, and so I gave her a little lecture on the impropriety of coming to the countess' room, on purpose to ask the count to go to walk.

"You know," I said, "that you would not do so in America."

"Yes, I would," she answered. "I have done it, lots of times!"

"But you were younger then, and therefore more excusable," I continued.

She merely shrugged her shoulders in reply, and just then seeing the count coming to the gate she darted out to meet him.

I might as well have spared my reproof. It did no good, and it only sets the Baxters against me to show that I do not approve of their conduct. Several times Mrs. Baxter has appealed to me for support against some of Jessie's wild plans, but the only result was that Jessie became sullen, and moped and pouted until her mother came round to her views, and then both of them treated me as though I had been trying to interfere. I think every time that I never will say another word either for or against any of their projects.

But it does annoy me to see how things are going on! It is plain that there is a great deal of gossip in the house about the Baxters. Their calling the count so often up to their room while the countess was confined to hers has made a world of talk. And the joke of it is, these people seem to think that the mother, instead of the daughter, is the object of the count's attentions, or, rather, is paying attention to the count. None of them seem to be able to get it into their heads that so young a girl can be bewitched about so old a man. Miss Cavendish understands it, because she has witnessed performances somewhat similar in English society; but she declares that "America whips the universe," as regards flirting. And in the face of what is going on here I don't know how to contradict her!

This morning I happened to go early to the dining-room for a glass of spring water, and while the waiter was gone to fetch it I went to the window and looked out. The shutters were closed and I could only see a little of the yard through the slats. There, right under the window, pacing up and down in a hurried way,

was Jessie Baxter! She could not see me, and I watched her undisturbed, wondering what had brought her there alone at that early hour. Suddenly she sprang forward with a joyful exclamation, and just then the outside door closed and the count came down the steps. He had a newspaper in his hand, and after answering Jessie's greeting he turned towards the nearest arbour, Jessie following him, of course. I know he has been in the habit of going there before breakfast. I have often seen him from my window, sitting there alone, reading. And Jessie usually gets up late, so she has never joined him there before. I suppose after this she will be up bright and early every morning, and on the watch for the count's appearance.

An alarming accident happened to-day. A little boy, one of a family of children staying at a hotel in Schneckenberg, fell out of a pleasure boat and came very near being drowned. He was insensible when recovered, and there was great excitement until he was found to be alive.

Among the strangers on the shore was a young man of rather fine appearance, who seemed to single out Jessie as a worthy object of scrutiny. He hovered near our party as long as we stayed at the lake, and cast regretful glances after us when we passed him on the way home. We all noticed his admiration of Jessie, and the count was disposed to rally her on her conquest. He informed us that the youth was no less a personage than Prince Wandelstern, heir to rather limited possessions, but of descent sufficiently exalted to enable him to mate with royalty.

It would be curious if he should prefer an "American queen" to a European princess for a wife. At present, however, his prospects in the direction of the New World are rather dim. Jessie was quite indifferent to his homage, and seemed really hurt that the count could have the heart to tease her about him.

I am thankful that we have nothing to do with this treacherous

lake, excepting to walk beside it and eat the fish which are taken from it.

Mrs. Baxter, it seems, lost her husband by drowning, and since then she cannot bear the water, and Jessie is strictly forbidden to go out in a boat without her knowledge. She would have gone though, one day with the count, if I had not happened to hear about it in season. I reminded her of her promise, and as soon as the count learned that Mrs. Baxter objected he gave up the plan at once. Jessie was angry with me for a long time ; but this accident has given her a wholesome dread of the treacherous water and the narrow little boats, which the slightest wrong motion would upset.

I was glad to see that the count did not go down to the harbour to read his newspaper this morning. I presume Jessie was in the yard, for she came in to breakfast with her hat on, looking anxious and uneasy, and I heard Mrs. Baxter complaining of being disturbed by her daughter's early rising. The girl is becoming very nervous. She watches every movement of the count when we are all together, and I see her a dozen times a day, hanging around the halls or wandering about the yard in the hope of meeting him.

This evening we went to a Hungarian concert at the Grand Hotel in Schneckenberg. The count procured our tickets for us, and as the numbers were consecutive we supposed that we should sit together ; but on arriving we found that the Baxters and Miss Cavenish were at the end of one row, and the Urwalds and I at the beginning of the next. Jessie's face grew long at this discovery, and she hinted pretty strongly that she would like to change places with me ; but I pretended not to understand, and went with the countess to take the seats which belonged to us. The count did not attend us there, he was to come a little later. Jessie's head was continually twisting around to look for him, and presently she left her seat and ran around to us.

"Where is the count?" she asked eagerly.

"Do you want him? Is there anything he can do for you?"

inquired the countess with a tone so excessively polite as to imply reproof of impertinence.

Her manner was not entirely lost upon Jessie, who looked embarrassed for an instant and then replied :

“Oh, no, I was only afraid he wasn’t coming, that’s all.”

“I daresay he will be here in season,” said the countess, and after a pause Miss Jessie thought it better to return to her companions.

A few minutes afterwards the count appeared. He went first to the other row, supposing that we were all together. Jessie sprang up to greet him, holding out both her hands as though begging him to rescue her. Her face, previously so clouded, was in a glow, and her whole frame seemed to quiver with eager delight.

He stopped only a moment and then worked his way to our part of the hall. But all the evening Jessie kept leaning back and shooting at him glances so impassioned that they seemed to burn my cheek as they went past. I wonder that these people are so blind ! Or, if they see, why they don’t do something to put a stop to this absurd, one-sided romance ! The young prince was there and watched Jessie with much interest. But she had no eyes for him, and did not seem to be conscious of the existence of any other being than the count.

We have been to-day to the farm-house on the hill, the one which I get up at sunrise to look at. It has always seemed so bright and peaceful up there ! But I don’t think I shall ever care to look at it again ; it is connected with so many disagreeable impressions.

We started in the usual order, and Jessie was as gay as a lark until we stopped to rest under some trees at the edge of a wood. Miss Cavendish asked the count a question about a flower she had picked, and he sat down by her to examine it. Jessie began to mope at once, and after we started she was not at all pleased because we walked abreast across the field, the count being between his wife and Miss Cavendish. Pretty soon we came to a gate

leading through a farm-yard, and a ferocious dog rushed at us to the length of his chain and snapped and yelped as though he wanted to tear us to pieces. The count told us to wait outside while he went in to inquire the way. But Jessie followed at his heels, although her mother begged her to stay, fearing that the dog might break loose. They were gone some time, and when they returned Jessie was in high spirits, with a long story to tell about the cottage and its inmates. But her gaiety was soon eclipsed; for the count did not appear to notice any of her manoeuvres to lead him on in advance of the rest of us, and we all proceeded across the fields in a row.

The grass was high and full of wild flowers. It was a pretty sight. And Jessie, finding that she could not make the count hurry, tried the plan of lingering behind, hoping, of course, that he would stay too. But we went on, and pretty soon she called out that she was going to stay to pick flowers. Whereupon her mother urged her to come with us, as it was a long way to the top of the hill and we wanted to get there before noon. But she vouchsafed no reply, and when we looked around she was nowhere to be seen. After a few moments we caught a glimpse of her hat amidst the grass, and watching her I saw how she bobbed about here and there, every little while rising up to see where we were and whether the count had turned back to join her. At last we came to the end of the open ground, and after we had gone through the gate there was nothing left to do but wait for the truant. Her mother called, and we all called, but she did not answer, and not until she had kept us there a full quarter of an hour did she slowly draw near, with flushed cheeks and pouting lips, and eyes which had only reproachful glances for the count and no recognition whatever for the rest of the party. Her feelings and wishes were so plainly written on her face that none of us could fail to be conscious of them, and a rather awkward silence ensued, which Miss Cavendish hastened to break by exclaiming over the beautiful mosses which covered the ground, and the fine contrast between their lively green and the silvery trunks of the birch trees above them. A group of loose horses in

the distance afforded another subject of discourse, and we were soon chatting in our usual fashion, all but Jessie, who followed slowly with mournful face, and finally sank down on a mossy bank at the edge of the wood and said she wanted to stay behind and rest awhile. We showed her the farm-house at the top of the next hill—only a very little more climbing to reach it—where she could rest as long as she might wish, and we tried to frighten her with the loose horses ; but no, she would not go on. Her mother looked worried and out of patience, and at last said that we could not wait for her any longer, and if she was determined to stay she must stay alone. Jessie looked up quickly and furtively at the count as we turned away ; but he either did not see, or pretended not to, and we went slowly up the hill. The count was a few steps ahead, and occasionally he would turn back and playfully pull the countess up the steep grassy slope ; and once Miss Cavendish stumbled over a stone and he ran to help her. She was not much hurt, and we had a merry laugh over the adventure. Presently there was a rush behind us, and Jessie flew by, as though exulting in her youth and strength, and stood first at the top of the hill, regarding our leisurely ascent with undisguised contempt.

The view was glorious, and we forgot our exertions in the pleasure afforded by so wide a prospect. But Jessie was soon tired of raptures over the scenery, and she began to complain of thirst and fatigue, and to wish that she could have a glass of milk. The count told her to sit down on one of the benches under the trees and he would go to the farm-house and get the milk. At this proposition she sprang up, and catching hold of his arm, hurried him away, beginning to chatter before she was out of hearing, and glancing up into his face at every second step. Mrs. Baxter looked after them with a smile and a shrug, and then turning to the countess, exclaimed :

“ Well countess, what are you going to do about it ? ”

I was horrified beyond expression at her want of tact. Just as though the count were equally involved in her daughter's misdoings, and the two were carrying on a high-handed flirtation. It is not the first time, either, that she has betrayed a consciousness of

what was going on. I remember one day, after some unusually bold proceeding on Jessie's part, she said to the countess :

"You and your husband seem to understand each other perfectly about everything ! It is so nice !" implying—"If you did not feel perfect confidence you would be jealous now !"

And another time she broke out with :

"How splendidly you have trained your husband ! He is so polite and gallant to other ladies !"

The countess meets all these impertinent speeches with her unmeaning society smile, and lets them pass without comment. But what must she think of the woman, and of the nation to which she and I belong ?

I must own that one great fault in the average American man and woman, especially woman, is a lack of reserve. Americans "turn themselves inside out" too readily ; they "slop over" ; they "give themselves away." And when they take the same liberty with other people's concerns, it is no wonder that they are considered ill-bred and inquisitive. This lack of reserve is a perfectly natural defect in a new organisation founded upon free institutions. It will correct itself in time, leaving the noble qualities, of which it is the excess, unharmed. The most perfectly well-bred persons I have ever met have been Americans, because their good manners were the result of good feeling, and their tact was directed by taste, so that the result was harmonious character, not borrowed polish. But it takes an American to appreciate the difference, and in the meantime it aggravates me to see my country represented by unworthy specimens. If Mrs. Baxter and her daughter were low, coarse people, it would be different. But they are not. They are uncommonly genteel in their looks and ways, and would be considered attractive in any society. They are no more ignorant than the generality of fashionable women ; they are well connected, and, I doubt not, move in the first circles in their own part of our broad land. It is only that they are not afraid of anybody nor anything, and mean to do just what they choose. And the mother is too silly and the daughter too young to perceive the impracticability of such principles in the conduct of life.

The count and Jessie returned before long with the milk, and she sat down contentedly to drink it, contented, however, only so long as the count was standing beside her ; for he sauntered away after a few moments to the upper group of trees, where he threw himself down on one of the benches beside his wife, and laid his head in her lap.

Jessie and her mother followed very soon, and by-and-bye Miss Cavendish and I joined the party. But there was something in the air which prevented any real enjoyment. Jessie watched the count with hungry eyes, and Mrs. Baxter watched the husband and wife with curiosity, as though to see whether they were really fond of each other. But they are not at all demonstrative in their affection. I never saw him so free as this before, and I have been with them a great deal. At first the countess smoothed his hair and passed her hand caressingly over his forehead, but happening to catch the eager gaze of the Baxters, her face flushed, she took away her hand, and sat still with averted head, looking out over the opposite meadows.

It was awkward and uncomfortable for us all, and I was glad when Miss Cavendish began to talk about starting for home. We went by another path down the hill, a much pleasanter way, less steep and more picturesque.

The count and countess kept together, walking more slowly than we did, and Jessie stayed behind too, and flitted in and out of the bushes and back and forth along the slope, always in sight of the count, and with a meaning glance whenever she passed him. She reminded me of a butterfly, in her erratic hovering and flying about. It looked just as though she were trying her utmost to lure the count away from his companion. The countess was evidently embarrassed by her performances, and when we reached the gate, which he held open for us to pass through, she lingered until we had gone on, and then said something to him in a low voice. I guessed that she was urging him to leave her and go on with Jessie, as the better way of ending the dilemma. Whatever it was, he seemed to be in opposition at first ; but after they joined us she kept beside me, and when Jessie presently

resorted to her old trick of calling the count to look at some wonderful object at a distance, he no longer shunned his fate, but allowed her to take possession of him for the rest of the walk home.

Things cannot go on in this way much longer, I am sure,—and it is all so unnecessary!

Oh, my beloved country! What is to become of us as a people, if the rising generation be allowed to follow all their whims from infancy to maturity unchecked, and obedience to children be considered the first duty of parents? How can we govern ourselves as a nation, if self-control be not the earliest principle inculcated at home?

Better by far the rigid discipline of Puritan days than the excessive laxity which now prevails, better for individual character and for the public good. For then the undue restraint of youthful feeling found its recompense in the liberty of a well-balanced judgment in riper years; now emotion is exhausted before it has had time to develop, and childhood destroys the pleasure which belongs to prime.

There was an extra service in the church this evening just before dark. We all went, as we were told that the music would be very fine.

The church was not full when we entered, and we obtained seats in a good place, about the middle of the centre aisle. The count was at the end of the slip, the countess next, then myself, then Mrs. Baxter, then Miss Cavendish, and last of all, Jessie, who was in her usual state of despair at being separated from the count. But there was no way of making any change, for the seats before and behind us were rapidly filled, and a throng of peasants crowded the aisles. One great awkward fellow just behind us leaned so far over the back of our slip that the count was obliged to sit forward, and soon becoming tired of this constrained position, he whispered to his wife that he was going out to stand by the side door. She nodded in acquiescence, and he

worked his way to the back of the church, where I presently saw him standing amidst a group of picturesquely-attired peasants.

As soon as he had left, his wife stood up a few moments, reading from her prayer-book, and then knelt upon the footstool with her face hidden in her clasped hands.

The service began, and we all sat very still, out of respect for the surrounding worshippers. Mrs. Baxter's eyes were closed; she seemed to be in a devotional mood. I heard her say to the countess the other day that she could join in any religious service wherever she might be.

But pretty soon Jessie discovered that the count was where she could get at him, and she immediately began to fidget about and look around at him and smile. Her mother was speedily conscious of the girl's restlessness, and opening her eyes she shook her head at her with a severe glance. Whereupon Jessie began to pout, and a minute later she leaned forward and whispered that her head ached and she wanted to get into the fresh air. But Mrs. Baxter waved her off, with a sharp injunction to sit up and behave herself and not make the Catholics angry at us for disturbing their services. This answered for a little while, but another glance at the handsome count looking so stately amidst the peasants was too great a temptation, and again the wayward girl, now really pale from rebellious impatience, leaned across Miss Cavendish and complained that the smell of the incense made her sick, and if she could not go out she should faint away. But Mrs. Baxter again refused permission and again told her to behave herself, a comprehensive charge which led me to suspect that the usually indulgent mother began to see the necessity of opposing some check to the daughter's infatuation.

Jessie did not faint away, and none of us had the least fear that she would; for we had been in the church scores of times when the smell was much stronger, and she had never thought of noticing it. She made up the incense story out of something she had once heard me say about a friend who could not endure the odour and was always made faint by it.

I could not help wondering whether there was as much going

on under the surface in every group in that large congregation as in ours ! There was the countess praying devoutly, probably for the blessing of an heir ; there was Mrs. Baxter, outwardly reverent, but all the while watching her daughter out of the corner of her eye ; there were Miss Cavendish and I, apparently absorbed in what was before us, but in reality keenly observant of Miss Jessie's performances, and anticipating a good laugh when we should get together to compare notes ; and there was Jessie herself—well, there is no putting limits to the wild imaginations which such a head might be indulging under such circumstances !

Fortunately, the service did not last long, and the minute the congregation rose, Jessie managed to slip and slide along between the people until she reached the count, and when we emerged from the crowd she was standing beside him and looking as comfortable as though incense had never been invented. She proposed a walk ; but a shower coming up, we were invited to spend the evening at Mrs. Baxter's instead. Jessie was wild with delight at the prospect, and danced before us all the way upstairs. She did not succeed in sitting beside the count, but her chair was directly opposite his, and there was only a little round table between them. While we were all talking, his hand often rested upon the table, and it was curious to see how Jessie kept flourishing her two pretty hands over the cover in a kind of "*come-and-catch-me*" game. He did not seem to notice her movements ; but her intention was plain enough to the rest of us, I am sure.

After a while she left her seat, and drawing up a leather invalid chair in front of the table, she placed herself in it in a nearly recumbent attitude, and arranged her drapery in artistic folds. Her sleeves were short to the elbow, with frills of lace below, a pretty fashion which set off her plump arms and delicate hands to the best advantage, and she was continually holding out her arm and contemplating it at a distance, with a glance under her eyelids to see if the count was admiring her charms.

This by-play went on all the evening, and it disturbed me so that I could not take any comfort. For my part, I always feel mortified if I am lying down when a man comes into the room,

and as to lolling about on purpose, it never would have entered my head in my giddiest days. I sometimes think this girl cannot be very innocent-minded, and so she acts from instinct as a wicked woman would act from design. At any rate, she needs to be trained with a strong hand, though I doubt whether it is now possible ever to get the nonsense out of her. As she lay there in the strong light, in that alluring attitude, fluttering her jewelled hands in the air and looking at the count with her cheeks all in a flame and her eyes shining out from between her half-closed lids, I could not think of anything but the gaudy chromos of "*The Light of the Harem*" and other pictures of the sort, such as one sees occasionally in passing barber's shops and restaurants. And to think that she was an American girl, a descendant of the Puritans, and only sixteen years old !

We took a long walk to-day. The road was pleasant and the scenery beautiful ; but, as usual, Jessie's performances spoiled our enjoyment. I say *our* enjoyment, for it is evident that we are all more or less embarrassed by the peculiar situation. The count works hard, generally without success though, to keep the party together ; his wife is constantly on her guard not to betray consciousness of the girl's strange conduct ; Mrs. Baxter goes from one to another, as though to keep each in good humour and prevent interference with her daughter's plans ; Miss Cavendish is silent and cross, and as for myself, I feel quite tired and stupid under so much manœuvring. The worst of it is, I fear the countess is losing her confidence in us all. I am sure she thinks because we do not appear to notice Jessie's proceedings that such actions are in accordance with the manners of English-speaking nations. But what can Miss Cavendish and I say or do, especially as the count is involved in the matter ? It must come to some kind of a crisis before long, if things go on as they did to-day !

The first halt we made was at a mill, a picturesque old building beside a shady stream. The miller's house, just across the road, was adorned with brilliant paintings of sacred subjects, and a

wooden figure of the Virgin and Child rose above the front gable of the roof. There was a rustic bridge across the stream, and a brood of young ducks was swimming in the water below as we passed over. Miss Cavendish said the place would make a fine sketch, and the count laughingly advised her to begin to draw it, while he consulted the miller about the best path to our destination. He evidently meant us all to wait for him outside ; but as soon as he had entered the mill Jessie ran after him, and when we came up to the door we could see her close beside him, looking up into his face and smiling at every word he spoke. When they came out she kept her place, and as the road was only wide enough for two, she had him all to herself the rest of the way.

The house we went to visit stood on a steep hill, and there were tables and rows of benches under the orchard trees at the top. We were glad to rest, and dropped down just where we happened to be, all but Jessie, who, as soon as the count took his seat, rushed towards him exclaiming, "*I must sit by my beloved !*" and nestled close up to him, with an affectionate glance which was, however, entirely lost on him, he being occupied in cutting down a nettle with his umbrella handle. He did not seem to hear her remark, either ; but the countess did. After a few minutes Jessie began to complain of thirst, and, of course, the count offered to get her a drink.

"Wouldn't you all like some beer ?" he asked ; but we agreed in preferring to postpone drinking until the end of the walk, and so he and Jessie went alone to the house. After a short time the count returned and advised our going into the house, as we could rest better there. Miss Cavendish and I started at once, leaving him with his wife and Mrs. Baxter, who were a little farther off. When we two entered the room Jessie was sitting at a table with a glass of beer beside her, and the count's glass stood in front of his empty chair opposite. She looked up disappointed as we came in, but soon rallied, and began to tell what a splendid time she and the count had had hunting up the people and getting the beer. They had been into the kitchen and everywhere. Presently Mrs. Baxter entered alone, and looking out of the window,

I saw the count and countess talking together under a tree. My heart went down into my boots at the sight; I thought the end had come! But a few minutes later they entered smiling, the countess excusing the delay by saying that she thought there would not be room for so many in the house.

The count sat down to his beer, and when he had finished it he said to his wife:

"Come, I want you to see what a pretty kitchen they have here!"

"Perhaps the other ladies would like to see it too," she replied, as she rose to go with him.

Mrs. Baxter did not happen to hear what was said, and Miss Cavendish and I waited purposely to let the pair have a little comfort together alone. But Jessie sprang up and hurried after them, and when we reached the kitchen she had planted herself at one side of the count, and was looking worried because he talked more to his wife than to her.

When we left the house and started on the return walk, we all crossed the orchard together, and lingered about, picking flowers and admiring the view. Jessie made several attempts to entice the count away from us, but he would not go, and finally she drew back pouting, and stood still under a tree. Nobody took any notice, and we were having quite a merry time, when just as we were about to descend the hill we looked back to see whether she were coming. Her mother called to her, but instead of answering she suddenly fell forward flat on her face in the grass. We ran back in a great fright, fearing that she had been taken with a fit. But her mother acted as though the scene were not entirely new to her. She merely said in a dry tone:

"Jessie Baxter, get up this minute and behave yourself!"

Jessie did not stir, and we all stood looking at each other in a most uncomfortable silence. The count finally walked off, and after a few moments Jessie raised her head and gradually picked herself up.

We found the count waiting for us at the foot of the hill, and we went on as though nothing had occurred. After we had

passed the mill our party happened to separate, the count and Jessie with Miss Cavendish going ahead and reaching home before the rest of us.

Miss Cavendish says that Jessie looked as though she would like to annihilate her ; but she did not care. The count seemed quite pleased to have her along, and she was not going to leave them together, after such a scene as we had just gone through.

After supper, feeling out of sorts and wishing to be alone, I went through the field to a favourite resort of mine—a stout, scrubby tree, with branches very near the ground, and wide-spreading limbs above, upon one of which I have found a comfortable seat where I am completely hid from the sight of any one passing by. The tree stands near the fence, and on the other side of the fence is a low summer-house, approached from the Pension through a shady lane. It is usually full of guests all the forenoon, but hardly anyone goes there after dinner, and I am almost sure of being alone in that part of the world towards evening.

To-night, however, I had scarcely settled myself comfortably in my lofty nest to watch the rising moon when I heard the sound of steps in the lane, and looking out between the branches I saw Count Urwald pacing slowly along, smoking a cigar, with his hands behind him, as he often walks when quite at his ease. He went back and forth a few times and then sat down in the arbour. A minute later Jessie came flying down the path.

“I saw you from my window!” she cried out joyously, adding in a sentimental tone, as she sat down beside him: “Oh, isn’t the moonlight lovely?”

But the count rose immediately and went outside of the arbour, saying by way of reply:

“You ought not to be out here so late without any shawl or bonnet.”

As he spoke hasty footsteps again sounded on the gravel, and the countess approached.

“I couldn’t come before, I was waiting to get your overcoat ; you’d better put it on,” she said, and then perceiving Jessie she added: “Oh, are *you* here, Miss Jessie?”

"Yes," answered Jessie meekly.

"I was just telling her that she would take cold in the night air," remarked the count.

The countess turned again towards her, and spoke in a deliberate manner which meant more than so young a girl would be likely to understand.

"My husband asked me to meet him here to walk in the moonlight ; but as your dress is so thin I think it would be better to go back to the house."

And back they went, the countess walking between her husband and Jessie, and not a word being spoken by any one of the three as long as they were within hearing distance.

It was an awkward affair. The countess was evidently annoyed at being obliged to lose her moonlight walk with her husband, and he, I take it for granted, was annoyed at being found by her alone with Jessie. As for Jessie, her dissatisfaction was probably limited to the breaking up of the moonlight interview, from which she was expecting so much happiness.

The full moon was so glorious last night that we all went out about nine o'clock to walk in the woods. After the lesson of the evening before I expected to find Miss Jessie a little more reticent in her manners towards the count, but she did not appear to have learned anything from that mistake. She hung around him whenever we stopped to rest, and she kept close beside him while we were walking. She did not like it at all because now and then when the path was rough he stopped and went back to help his wife and the rest of us over difficult places. After rambling about for some time among the tall pines to catch the effect of the moonlight between their trunks, we came to an open place at the top of the hill where we were glad to sit down and rest. The moon shone very bright, and the place was almost as light as day. Mrs. Baxter seemed in an unusually gay mood, and after talking a while about various games and other ways of making time pass agreeably in society, she insisted that the count should stand up

with her and play "Orator," as she used to help play it in America—that is, the count was to recite a poem with his hands behind his back, while she, putting her arms under his, was to make the accompanying gesticulations. I daresay it may be a comical game in a large company, between persons well matched as to size and dress, but in this case it did not work very well. The count being a tall, large man, and Mrs. Baxter a short, slender woman, the arms were absurdly small, and then, somehow, the whole affair looked too familiar and undignified. The recitation did not last long, and nobody seemed to enjoy it much, excepting Mrs. Baxter, who was in high spirits. On sitting down she was next the count, and she directed her conversation exclusively to him. All of a sudden she burst out with :

"Oh, dear me ! I feel so tired ! Count, if you don't take care, I shall lay my head on your shoulder !"

Miss Cavendish was so disgusted that she hastened to say :

"Perhaps the countess would not quite approve of that !"

And the countess added, with a good deal of spirit : "Oh, it does not concern me at all. The question is whether the count would like it !"

He laughed, rather scornfully, I thought, and a moment afterwards got up and began to pull at the branches of the fir-tree which grew beside the bench.

This incident surprised me and seemed to confirm Miss Cavendish's frequently reiterated opinion that Mrs. Baxter herself would willingly flirt with Count Urwald if her daughter would allow her an opportunity.

We did not stay much longer in the woods, and on the way home Jessie took care to engross the count's attention to herself.

On arriving at the house the Baxters insisted upon our going up to their rooms to see some pictures of Tyrolean scenery which they had been buying of a travelling photographer. We excused ourselves at first on the ground of the lateness of the hour ; but they urged so hard that it seemed better to yield. Mrs. Baxter drew the table up to the sofa and spread the photographs before us, and we became much interested in looking at them.

Jessie, contrary to her usual practice, made no attempt to remain near the count, but withdrew to the other side of the room and busied herself with writing. After a while she finished her letter, and then putting on her hat and shawl again, she came over to our side of the room.

"What have you got on your things for at this time of night?" asked Mrs. Baxter in surprise.

Jessie looked at the count instead of at her mother, as she replied :

"I want this letter to go early to-morrow morning, so I am going to run over to the mail box with it, that's all."

The sly little thing ! The mail box is some distance down the street, and she evidently expected the count to escort her ; indeed, I have no doubt that she wrote the letter on purpose to have an excuse to go out with him. For some time she has acted as though she were possessed to be alone with him, and this was a desperate expedient to secure an interview.

But either the count did not understand, or did not think it wise to humour her. He only said good-naturedly :

"It is too late for you to go out again to-night. My wife and I will carry the letter to the post for you when we go home."

She looked disappointed and annoyed ; but there was no more to be said.

We took our leave in a few minutes, and after seeing us to the door, the count and countess went down the street to the post box. I heard their voices presently on their return, and looking through my closed blinds I saw them coming slowly up the path arm in arm. They were laughing at some joke of their own—most likely at the expense of Americans in general and the Baxters in particular.

It is evidently all right between them, and so the rest is no matter, after all.

This morning, just at six o'clock, I heard footsteps in the hall near my door, and supposing it to be the chambermaid with hot

water, I drew back the bolt, and then as she did not come in I opened the door and put my head out. What was my surprise to see Jessie Baxter standing near the Urwalds' rooms! My first thought was that her mother had suddenly been taken very ill and that she had come to ask the count to bring the doctor. But before I had time to inquire what the matter was, the countess opened her door and I drew back my head.

I could hear the tone of surprise in her voice as she bade Jessie "Good morning." There was a moment's pause, and then Jessie said, hesitatingly :

"I came for the count to go to walk in the woods!"

"Indeed!" was the reply. "I am sorry I cannot ask you to come in. Our rooms are in disorder and my husband is just getting up. But I will tell him that you are here."

She went away, and soon came back, with suppressed laughter in her tones.

"My husband says he did not know that you intended walking in the woods this morning, and he could not think of keeping you waiting until he is dressed."

"Oh!" said Jessie, evidently in embarrassment, and then she turned away and the countess closed her door.

I closed mine too, and sat down astounded at what I had heard. I wondered what had possessed the girl to take so daring a step, and suddenly it flashed into my mind that last evening while we were exclaiming over the beauty of the moonlight, the count had said that he liked best to be in the woods early in the morning. I knew he was referring to several walks he had taken there with his wife before the Baxters came; but Jessie, little simpleton! no doubt understood the words to contain a secret invitation to her to be his companion the next morning.

I presume she expected to find him up and dressed and ready at her light tap to open the door and steal out of his room, leaving his wife asleep, or, at least, safe in her bedroom and all unconscious of what was going on in the parlour!

At breakfast everybody appeared as usual; but afterwards, as

we stood in a group in the garden, the countess said with some emphasis to Mrs. Baxter :

“ Your daughter came at six o'clock this morning to get my husband to take a walk with her in the woods. I must apologise for not having been able to invite her to come in at that early hour, as my husband was dressing.”

Jessie turned away while the countess was speaking, but Mrs. Baxter said, laughingly :

“ It's no matter. It served her right. If she will make such early calls she must expect to find folks in their shirt-sleeves ! ”

The countess, who had evidently meant to convey a reproof which she expected the mother to supplement, seemed rather surprised at the indifference with which her information was received. Miss Cavendish and I did our best to look the disapprobation we felt ; but, of course, we could not say anything. We separated soon afterwards, and rainy weather prevented any plan for an excursion.

I was not surprised to hear this morning that the Urwalds are going away to-morrow. Since that last exploit of Jessie's they have had very little to say to the Baxters, and the Baxters seem to feel that there is no use in trying to make further advances in that quarter.

Yesterday afternoon, the mother and daughter went to Schneckenberg, and this afternoon when Miss Cavendish came back from the circulating library she told me that she saw the two walking with Prince Wandelstern along the road towards the lake.

We spent last evening very pleasantly with the Urwalds in their parlour. The Baxters did not make their appearance, and their names were not mentioned by any one of us. It seemed like old times, and we parted from our friends, hoping and expecting to meet them again. We received a cordial invitation to visit them

at their castle on the Rhine. I am sure I would go a long distance out of my way to see them at home.

This morning the Baxters greeted us from their place at breakfast, but there was no running over from their table to ours, and no lingering in the hall to meet us, as formerly. They left the room before we did, and when the carriage came round to take the Urwalds to the station, neither Jessie nor her mother was there to say "Good-bye."

A few minutes after the Urwalds had driven away, I went down the lane to the little shop to buy some needles, and there, standing at the fountain, was Miss Jessie, with Prince Wandelstern at her side. She did not see me, and I passed by without speaking. She was dabbling in the water with one hand, while in the other she held her coquettish little hat by the strings, and she was gazing up at the prince with the same eager intense look I had often seen in her face when she was talking to the count.

I watched her some time from the shop window while waiting to be served, and as I stood there the Urwalds drove by. They had been to the post-office, and were now really starting on their journey. He was reading a letter, and she seemed to be listening to it. Neither of them saw the couple at the fountain, and Jessie was so much occupied with her companion that she did not notice the passing carriage.

Miss Cavendish has received a summons to England, and is not likely to return hither. I am really sorry she is going away. We are to correspond, and she has made me promise to let her know how the affair between Jessie and the prince turns out. She wants me to visit her in England, and whether we ever meet again or not, I am sure we shall always be good friends.

Mrs. Lester has arrived and taken possession of the room above mine. She is a tall, slender woman with very black eyes and hair. She has a slightly foreign look, and without knowing it I

pleased her very much by asking her whether she was of Spanish descent. It seems that she spent a good many years with her husband in Cuba, and has a romantic fondness for everything Spanish. She wears a mantilla over her head when she goes out into the garden, and often has a fan in her hand when she appears in the parlour of an evening. Her manners are very affable ; she has a pleasant word for everybody, from the haughty German baroness to the boot-black, and is consequently a favourite with the entire household. I am glad she is going to stay all winter ; most of our present company are intending to leave before cold weather sets in, and it is not likely that the house will fill up again before spring.

I like Mrs. Lester better and better every day, she possesses that (in a near neighbour) inestimably valuable quality of being friendly without being intrusive. She is communicative and yet not confidential, and with all her frankness she has sufficient reserve to satisfy even Mr. Montague. I wonder what has become of that young man, and whether he has explained himself satisfactorily to the Patras family !

The Baxters have decided to spend the winter in Schneckenberg, and I am glad to be spared the anxiety of observing their performances ; for they are cultivating an increasingly intimate acquaintance with young Prince Wandelstern, which will be likely to end in disaster of some sort. Mrs. Baxter never takes advice, though she is always asking for it, and her daughter is quite unmanageable, so there is nothing to do but let them run their course and suffer for their folly afterwards. Frau Wartheim is becoming dissatisfied with their conduct already. She says the prince stays sometimes till after midnight in their rooms, and the servants gossip unpleasantly about his familiarities with Jessie. It is not at all probable that he thinks of marrying the girl : even if he were serious in his attentions, his family would interfere.

It is more likely that his purpose is dishonourable and that he mistakes their innocent freedom of manner for encouragement to license. I shall have a talk with Mrs. Baxter before she goes, for I certainly know more about German manners and customs than she does.

Another boarder for the winter—Miss Louisa Burton, from Delaware. She is going to be an artist, and has come here to take lessons of a celebrated figure painter in Schneckenberg. She has already made considerable progress in her art, but has only recently come abroad. She is a quiet, demure little body, devoted to her chosen work, and apparently regarding people and things around her only as they would “make up” in a picture.

A welcome surprise this morning in the shape of a letter from Mr. Montague, dated at Wiesbaden. He is coming here to stay all winter. It seems that he returned from America some time ago, but was taken ill soon after his arrival, and has been travelling about under the orders of physicians ever since his recovery. I suppose he was not well enough to write before. I have just answered his letter. He will be glad to learn that his old room is vacant and ready for his occupancy.

The Baxters have gone to Schneckenberg to live. I warned Mrs. Baxter about her new acquaintance, but she only laughed.

“He is a good boy, if he *is* a prince!” she said, “and he treats Jessie just as though she was his sister.”

I am afraid they will make themselves the talk of Schneckenberg, for the prince is also settled there for the winter, as a student in the university.

Mrs. Lester is a very interesting companion. She is earnest

and thoughtful, besides being unusually agreeable in manner. I was much struck by some of her remarks this afternoon. We went to Schneckenberg together, and as we were walking along the street, a hearse, covered with garlands of flowers, passed by. She looked after it intently and then said :

"If I ever take up a 'mission,' it will be to preach earth-closets for the living and cremation for the dead! Just think of the filth which is always accumulating in such a town as this—filth which could so easily be neutralised as regards harm, and doubled in value as regards useful qualities, by the employment of the simplest and most natural means! Solomon says '*Go to the ant, thou sluggard.*' I should like to add, '*Go to the cat, thou sloven, consider her ways and be wise!*' And as for the dead, it is horrible to think of the corruption which is going on just below the surface in these four great cemeteries close by! No wonder that scarlet fever and diphtheria break out every year, and that the people are in constant dread of typhus! And that isn't all. When I see a dead body carried to the grave, I never wonder as I used to do whether the person 'died happy' and is now 'in heaven,' but I wonder whether he or she is *really dead!*

"My friend," she continued, stopping before a milliner's window and apparently regarding the brilliant display of bonnets, though I am sure she did not notice one of them, "if you have never made a study of the subject, you have no idea how many people are buried alive in every country where burial in the earth is practised. They pretend to say that there is no danger in Germany, just because the bodies lie two days in the dead-house with rings on their fingers and bells on their toes; but how can such precautions be a sufficient safeguard, when we all know that persons have lain for weeks in a trance, and have afterwards come to life and lived for years? And think of our foolish custom at home of packing corpses in ice, and doing everything we can to quench the feeble spark which may still exist. The fact ought never to be forgotten that *there can be no certainty that death has taken place until corruption begins.* After that there is no hope; until then there is always danger of premature burial. And how

easy it would be to abide by this test, only people are so careless and so stupid. Just think what a horrible fate for any mortal to suffer. And hundreds do suffer it every year. It makes me almost wild to think about it."

I am sure I did not think of anything else all the rest of the afternoon ; and, in the evening, when Mrs. Lester came to my room, as she often does, to have a talk before going to bed, we returned to the same subject.

She has read a great many scientific journals with reference to cases of suspended animation, and has noted down all the stories she has heard about people being buried alive. She says she has scarcely ever questioned any person who did not know of at least one instance where premature interment was either suspected or proved. And she has gathered most startling statistics from thoroughly reliable sources. The statistics are, of course, founded upon the cases known, and from these one must conclude that many other victims have perished undiscovered. For instance, in Amsterdam, during twenty-five years, *nine hundred and ninety* cases of suspended animation are recorded ; in Hamburg, one hundred and seven in five years ; in New York, on an average, one person in two hundred. A French scientist gives one hundred and eighty-one cases, of which fifty-two were buried alive, the others were restored to life.

I could not get to sleep for a long time, thinking over these horrors. There could not be a more dreadful fate. For the coming to life in the coffin is not a semi-conscious movement, relapsing instantly into actual death ; it is a restoration to the activity of health, the natural awakening of a body cured and strengthened by complete repose. Persons rescued from premature burial almost always recover rapidly and take up their lives with increased vigour, and those unfortunate ones who are left to perish suffer, doubtless, a long and painful struggle before the air, which was buried with them, is quite exhausted. And the physical distress is only the least part of their agony. Think how vivid must be their remembrance of the past, their consciousness of the dreadful present, their visions of a possible future—possible,

were it not for the terrible mistake which consigned them to a living grave—and there they are, tightly confined within narrow boards, six feet of earth above them, no hope of rescue, loved ones mourning them far away, their presence needed in the home circle, they themselves conscious of increased capacity for noble endeavour, eager to atone for past faults, to spend every coming moment in being and doing good. And the worst bitterness of this forced renunciation is the thought that it is uncalled-for, that it need not have been.

It makes one almost afraid of one's fellow-beings to remember how we are at each other's mercy in this regard. Some people leave instructions in their wills about their burial; but there is no security in such arrangements, for no one knows where and how he may die. The only thing to do is for each enlightened person to try his best to bring about a wiser way of disposing of the dead. The wonder is that burial has been practised so long, and that physicians are not more earnest in advocating cremation.

It is a strange world, and the longer I stay in it, the less I feel at home.

Mr. Montague has arrived, looking very well and strong for one so recently an invalid. I told Mrs. Lester about him before he came, and she was much interested in my description of his appearance and character. I introduced them to each other at dinner, and supposed we should have a pleasant meal, as our seats are together, at the end of the table known as "the American quarter." But to my surprise, Mrs. Lester was unusually reserved, and the conversation was kept up principally by Mr. Montague and myself, with some help from Louisa Burton, who is never very talkative.

Mrs. Lester followed me into my room after dinner.

"So that is your Mr. Montague," she began. "Do you know anything about him, excepting what you have seen of him here?"

"No," I replied; "I never heard of him before."

"Then, be careful how you trust him," she continued. "I saw him a few weeks ago at Homburg, and he had a young lady with him. They occupied adjoining rooms, and were together constantly. People talked about them at the hotel, and I know they had not the same name, and they did not act like relations. I had almost forgotten about them until I met him at the table, but I am sure he is the same man."

"But it may have been a near relation, or some young lady placed temporarily under his charge," I suggested. "You know, Americans travel together much more freely than Europeans do."

"Yes; but something in their manner led people to suspect another kind of intimacy. Of course we may have been mistaken; but you know women have very keen intuitions, and I for one felt in my bones that there was something wrong. I came upon them once sitting in a retired place in a very affectionate attitude. They did not see me, and I turned back. Indeed, I don't think they ever noticed me amongst the crowd, and they stayed only a few days, while I was there all summer, and so naturally observed the people I met."

I proposed speaking of Homburg to see how he would act; but Mrs. Lester thought it would be better not to say anything to put him on his guard.

"If he feels at home here, his character will reveal itself by degrees," she said; "and I only give you this hint so that you may not be deceived in your estimate of his worth."

I am duly thankful for her kind intentions, but I am almost sure she is mistaken about his conduct at Homburg. Still, it is true that I know very little about him, and, although I am too old for sentiment, I do not wish to waste my time and thoughts upon a friendship with an unworthy person.

Our winter promises to be very cosy and agreeable. We are quite a little American colony—Mr. and Mrs. Manners, Mrs. Armstrong and her boy, Mr. Parkhurst, Mrs. Lester, Miss Burton,

Mr. Montague, and myself. I do not count the Ryders, for they keep themselves entirely secluded from the rest of us, and are principally occupied in paying visits among the members of the court circle in Schneckenberg.

With the exception of Mr. Parkhurst, everybody likes Mr. Montague. Mrs. Lester's prejudice is fast melting away. She says it is impossible to suspect a person so straightforward and even almost blunt in his ways. He spends most of his time in his own room, studying and writing, but often joins our circle in the evening, when he does not go to the theatre in Schneckenberg. He walks with us occasionally in the afternoon, and everywhere and always he is the same,—frank, sensible, rather boyish when he feels gay, and remarkably earnest in his serious moods. His standard for woman seems to be very high, and he often expresses disappointment that so few can be found who attain to it, or even approach it. He is especially pleased with women who try to accomplish something definite, who have a distinct purpose in their lives aside from the prospect of marriage. He often asks me about my former experience as a teacher, and takes great interest in my present attempts to write stories for children. He encourages Louisa Burton in her artistic studies, and finds it quite wonderful that she should have come to Europe alone for love of art. I take particular notice of his conduct towards her, because they are both young, and it would be a pity to have her career disturbed by a mistake as to his intentions. But I have never seen the least thing amiss in his manner, and Mrs. Lester agrees with me that if he has always been as careful, the troubles we know of must have been the fault of the girls themselves.

I had a long talk with Mr. Montague this evening, the others having gone to the opera in Schneckenberg. The conversation was at first upon general topics, but gradually it became more personal. Reference having been casually made to certain of last summer's occurrences, I ventured to mention the Patras family, and after a slight hesitation, apparently caused by reluctance to

admit that the girl had loved him without return, he expressed the surprise and sorrow he had felt on discovering that his friendliness had been misunderstood. He said he did not feel worried about the girl. She was very young, and would soon outgrow such a fancy, but he could not bear to have his conduct unjustly censured and his principles misjudged. "But," he added with one of his melancholy smiles, "we cannot expect complete recognition in this world, and I have made up my mind to go straight on in my own way, and if people mistake my purposes I cannot help it."

He seemed deeply moved, and after a short silence he told me another chapter of his experience which has been troubling him of late.

It seems that while he was attending a university in North Germany a few years ago, he had a serious illness, and the wife of the Lutheran pastor, hearing that a stranger, a Protestant, was lying low at the hospital, took an interest in his fate, and through her good offices undoubtedly contributed to his recovery. An acquaintance with the family naturally followed. The clergyman, an estimable man and distinguished in his profession, was many years older than his wife, she being young and handsome and rather frivolous for her position. Before the time came for her new friend to leave the place he learned to his horror that she was desperately in love with him. She declared her feelings without reserve; she wrote him letters which compromised her completely; she even offered to leave husband and children and home, and follow him wherever he might go. He had the firmness to resist the temptation, and his prompt departure saved her from exposure. He burned her letters and took leave of the family in such a way as to prevent suspicion on the husband's part of the wife's contemplated unfaithfulness. He never returned to that part of the country, and had since learned through indirect sources that the lady had resumed her former duties, and that there had been no disturbance of the family peace on his account.

"I tell you this," he said, on ending his narrative, "in order that you may not misunderstand me should any future complications, like that of last summer, arise. You know now how I have

acted under real temptation, and you can better judge whether I am likely to waste my time in unmeaning coquetries."

I thanked him for his confidence, and expressed in some measure the admiration I felt for his noble conduct towards the misguided temptress. It then occurred to me that it would be better to tell him about the German lady in Schneckenberg whose daughter considered herself engaged to him. His brow clouded angrily, and he exclaimed :

"Has that woman been here? Well, I can soon settle her!"

He then explained that on his first arrival in Schneckenberg he had lodged in the same house with the lady and her daughter, and had responded to their overtures of acquaintance because he wanted practice in speaking German, but that as to having paid the daughter any serious attention, the idea was absurd, and their position did not warrant them in making such a demand under any circumstances.

I ventured to say that, considering his personal advantages, and the difference in social customs, I thought he ought to be very careful in his intercourse with foreign girls.

He seemed rather offended at my suggestion, and replied with dignity that he knew he ought to be careful, but that he himself must be the judge of what carefulness required. He added that he should have a talk with the Schneckenberg lady, and let her know that he would not allow any interference with his affairs. He had one peculiarity, he said, namely an instinctive desire to keep his private business entirely to himself. People were welcome to criticise his actions, but they must not attempt to go behind these for his motives.

There seemed to me a flaw in his argument even while I was listening, but we were interrupted just then by the return of the party from the opera, and on thinking the matter over since, I feel pretty sure that his remarks were intended to apply to myself rather than to the German lady. Perhaps he takes me for a gossip old maid, and is annoyed because I know about these mistakes, which are evidently troubling him. He need not be afraid; I have no desire to pry into his affairs, or to talk about what I happen to

have observed. But, all the same, he need not expect that people will always view his conduct from his own standpoint, or refrain from attempting to understand his reasons for what he does.

Mrs. Lester has been telling me Mr. Parkhurst's history, which is very interesting. She never met him before, and he does not dream that she knows so much about him ; but she is well acquainted with some of his relations, and has often heard them speak of him.

It seems that when he was a young man he was engaged to a girl who afterwards jilted him in favour of his brother, and he took this double treachery so much to heart that he withdrew from society and went to live in a little cabin in the mountains, several miles from the village where they all belonged. He had money enough to support himself without labour, and so he spent his time in reading, botanising and hunting. He could see the village from his retreat, and once in a while he went down to order supplies ; but he had no intercourse with man or mortal, other than necessity compelled. He lived in this hut nine or ten years, with only his cats for company. He had nine cats, and these pets finally saved his life. One night his cabin caught fire, and he, being sound asleep, was nearly stupefied by the smoke ; but his cats sprang on the bed and scratched at the covering until they roused him. Three of them lost their own lives in saving his ; the others escaped with him.

I wish that people who insist that the cat is a selfish animal, without capacity for affection, could hear this story !

After the hut was destroyed Mr. Parkhurst did not feel inclined to build another, and at last decided to travel abroad, greatly to the satisfaction of his relatives, who were afraid he would end by becoming insane if he persisted in his hermit life.

Now I understand his interest in Robina's affair, and his disappointment when she preferred money to love. If we only knew the whole truth about each other's lives how much more sympathy

we should feel, how much more admiration for what is good, and pity for what is evil !

Poor Louisa Burton is almost discouraged about her painting. Her instruction at home was mostly in drawing, and she knew very little about artists and their ways. Now, she is in a large studio with several other pupils, and she comes in contact with artists of various schools and various ideas about how work should be done, and she hears so many, and such contrary opinions, that she is quite bewildered. Her teacher is patient, and she thinks he has a good style, but he is extremely enthusiastic, and goes off in such flights of fancy when he is giving instruction that she cannot always follow him. Then, some of her fellow pupils are of the "impressionist" persuasion in art, and they are always talking about "tones" and "values" and "qualities," and devising new and strange methods of producing effects and making their pictures "strong." Some of them use such quantities of paint that their work is like sculpture ; others despise brushes, and work almost exclusively with the palette knife ; others, again, are fond of dipping their fingers into the colours, and smearing the canvas as carelessly as possible, insisting that they can in that way produce hues which are not to be made by the brush. Then they are always discussing "high-lights" and "half-shadows," and their favourite exclamation is, "*Oh, the GRAYS in Nature !*"

Mr. Montague says that if these embryo artists would keep at their work and not talk so much about it they would get on faster. As none of us are painters, we cannot help the poor girl out of her dilemma further than to give her the common-sense advice to make her pictures look as much as possible like what they are intended to represent.

Mr. Montague came to my room this forenoon with a request for a private interview. He had a bundle of papers in his hand, and I supposed he had come to talk over the Patras affair. But

it was something quite different. It seems he has a niece in Berlin who has been studying singing there for several years, and is now nearly ready to make her *début* in opera, and he has been corresponding with numerous managers about bringing her out. He has at last made satisfactory arrangements with the director of the theatre in Schneckenberg, and the event is to take place next Spring. Meantime she is to stay here and continue her practice and attend rehearsals in Schneckenberg. She is coming in a few days, and the purpose of Mr. Montague's visit was to tell me, as his acquaintance of longest standing in the house, all about the matter and bespeak my friendly interest for the girl, who is young and in need of sisterly guidance. I was quite touched by the narrative and very willing to promise my sympathy and help in the trying ordeal to which the young stranger is so soon to be subjected. She is an orphan and poor, and her only chance of maintaining herself is in the use of her fine voice, as her general education has been neglected and she has no special talent, excepting for music.

She was brought up by her grandmother in a country home, and knows very little about the world, her time in Europe having been spent in musical study and practice.

I infer from what Mr. Montague says that the credit of discovering her gift of a fine voice, and of enabling her to cultivate it, is due to him, and this proof of his discernment and generosity only increases my respect, my almost reverence for his character. And his coming to me so confidentially this morning is a pleasant surprise, for I had been feeling a little hurt ever since our talk the other evening, fearing that he considered me inclined to be meddlesome with regard to his private affairs. But now it is all right, and I shall be glad to prove my true friendship for him by my affectionate care of his orphan niece. He evidently expects a great career for her. He says she is, without doubt, "a second Patti." I am quite impatient to see and hear her!

Miss Hattie Dillard arrived last night. Mrs. Lester gave me an

expressive glance as the stranger entered the room, and I was not astonished to learn afterwards that this was the young lady who was with Mr. Montague at Homburg. She is tall and thin, with very black eyes and hair, and a pale complexion, not handsome, nor striking in any way, and with shy, reserved manners which do not in the least suggest her future profession. Mr. Montague brought her to me with a special request for my interest in her behalf, and told her in my presence that she was to apply to me for advice in every difficulty.

The whole family is full of curiosity about the new-comer, and everybody is impatient to hear her voice, though of course no one would think of asking her to sing until she chooses to favour us. When I say everybody, I must except Mr. Parkhurst, who grumbles over the excitement, and takes no interest in the success of the *débutante*. Mr. Montague's opinion as to her being "a second Patti" has spread through the house (he must have told somebody besides me, for I was careful not to repeat the expression, considering it at least premature), and Mr. Parkhurst shrugs his shoulders in his most aggravating way, and says he has heard of so many *second Pattis* that he thinks he should prefer to hear a *third Patti*, if he cannot hear the *first*! I suppose the secret of his opposition lies in his dislike of Mr. Montague, which he has not yet overcome.

Mrs. Lester is very much mortified over her unjust suspicions at Homburg. She says she shall never trust her "bones" again in judging of character. There is no doubt that we are all constantly making the world out worse than it is through our hasty conclusions from merely surface appearances.

Miss Dillard sang for us last evening, to our great delight. She has a sweet, clear, well-cultivated voice, and sang several famous arias with facility and correctness. She has what seems to me a great fault in her way of singing: she *lets her voice down* on low notes, instead of keeping it in the same register with the other tones. I know this is the popular method nowadays, and the

harder one goes down the more applause one receives ; but it is not the *real* " old Italian method " (than which no better will ever be devised, that is certain !), and the practice results in injury to the high tones, and in an early breaking-up of the voice. Of course I shall not breathe a word of my disapproval ; but no temporary success of a singer and no amount of public applause will ever convince me that the modern way is right.

Mrs. Lester, who has heard the best music in many countries, says that Miss Dillard's voice is better suited to the concert hall than to the stage, and that she lacks expression, and has not a spark of dramatic talent.

I suggested that her youth and her want of experience might be to blame for what one misses in her rendering of familiar airs.

When she once becomes an independent singer, and has learned more of the meaning of life, especially if she should love and marry and become a mother—surely the awakening of her affections would be reflected in her voice ! Mrs. Lester agreed that when she comes to feel more deeply she may sing more feelingly, but she declares that a real artist is able to feign emotion, and that many voices have tears in them from the outset. She too does not mention her doubts of Miss Dillard's success to anybody but myself, and she is like me in hoping and wishing for the best.

Miss Dillard has been to Schneckenberg to consult with the director about her *début*. She is to take *soubrette* roles for the present, and the choice lay between *Aennchen* in *Der Frieschütz* and *the Page* in *Figaro's Hochzeit*. The Page was finally agreed upon, and the rehearsals are to begin next month.

The life of a professional singer is not an easy one, after all, at least at the beginning of the career. Miss Dillard spends a good part of each day in practice, and she is full of anxiety all the time about her voice. She is obliged to be extremely careful about her way of living, for fear of injuring that (in her case) all-important organ. She must not skate, and she must not dance ; she must not go out walking in the early mists, nor breathe the chilly

evening air. She must not eat nuts; she must not drink beer; she must have an abundance of nourishing food, and must drink red wine to keep her throat clear. I dare say that a great deal of this anxiety is needless, and will wear off after she becomes accustomed to singing in public.

I am certain of one thing—she talks too much. She is a regular little chatterbox, and not even the fear of injuring her voice (which argument we bring forward now and then) can keep her tongue still a moment when there is anybody to listen. And it is the same old story over and over: little anecdotes of her home life in America, details of her experience in the music school, and, above all, wonderings as to whether she shall have “a grand success” in her *début*, make up the sum of her communications. I like her best when she is talking about her grandmother, for whose kind care she seems really grateful, and whose satisfaction will be a principal element in her own triumph. She speaks feelingly, too, of her uncle’s kindness, though when he is present she is often capricious, and sometimes rather impertinent, considering the dignity of his bearing and the trouble he is constantly taking for her benefit. When she is older and has seen more of the selfishness of people in general, she will appreciate more fully his disinterested kindness.

I supposed that Louisa Burton and Miss Dillard would take to each other at once, as they are the only young girls in the house, and both are studying art. But they have very little to say to each other, and Miss Dillard seems impatient whenever Mr. Montague enters into a discussion about pictures, and sulks when he walks into Schneckenberg with Miss Burton. I am afraid that Hattie is of a rather jealous disposition, which will expose her to much suffering in her public career. She cannot expect her uncle to devote himself entirely to her, or to refrain, for her sake, from falling in love and marrying when he gets ready. Not that there is any thought of love in his friendliness towards Louisa Burton, who is absorbed in her studies, and evidently does not deceive herself by his attentions,

We are having bright, beautiful winter weather. Yesterday afternoon we all went down to the village landing to see the skating. The lake is frozen hard to a good distance out, and stakes with little flags on them are driven to mark the limit of safety.

In my young days it was considered unfeminine for girls to skate, and I am now too old to learn; but I envy proficient in the amusement, as they flit by us rosy and warm, while we are standing still, and stamping our feet to keep from freezing. Miss Dillard grumbled a good deal over her privations, but ended each outburst with the comforting reflection: "I would rather be a good singer than a good skater after all!"

Mr. Montague and Miss Burton attracted much attention by the excellence of their performance. A great many people from Schneckenberg took part in the sport, and the Ryders, who were out sleighing in a very showy equipage, condescended to halt at the landing and watch the animated spectacle.

I saw Jessie Baxter at a distance, skating with the prince. She was dressed in a picturesque costume, trimmed with fur, and with something like epaulettes on the shoulders. It looked like a partial copy of some national dress, perhaps of the principality to which her admirer belongs, that being in one of those northern regions where cords, and tassels, and frogged velvet garments abound.

Her mother spied me out in the crowd, and came over to have a little talk. They like living in Schneckenberg much better than at the Pension; they hear all the news, and are evidently having a gay time. She says the prince is "a real good boy."

Amongst other bits of gossip, she told me that the Ryders were laughed at in Schneckenberg, on account of their eager desire to be on visiting terms with the aristocracy, and that at the Court balls they were neglected and snubbed as thoroughly as decency would permit. I suppose she hears such things from Prince Wandelstern. I hope it is true; for Americans degrade themselves and insult their native country by running after vanities which are not in keeping with our free institutions.

Mrs. Lester has just received a letter from a great favourite of hers, the daughter of a school friend. The girl's parents are dead, and Mrs. Lester takes a motherly interest in her welfare. She lives with an aunt, and having sufficient means, the two ladies spend most of the time in travelling, settling down for a few months in any place that suits their fancy. Mrs. Lester has often talked to me of Honora Fanshawe, and I am very glad she is coming. From what I hear, she is one of the old-fashioned kind of girls; not that she is behind the times as to dress and manners—for by Mrs. Lester's account she is fond of society and is very stylish in her appearance—but what I mean is that she cherishes what are now rather obsolete ideas as to the delicacy and modesty and quietness which were formerly considered the most becoming adornments of womanly character. Mrs. Lester says that, without being remarkable for beauty or acquirements, she has something about her which makes her noticeable in any society, and men fall in love with her right and left wherever she goes. She is now over twenty-five years old, and Mrs. Lester is distressed because she is so indifferent about marrying. There was a faint rumour of her having had some kind of a romance several years ago, but Miss Fanshawe never alludes to any such episode, and Mrs. Lester does not wish to force her confidence.

Mr. Montague is suddenly obliged to go to England to consult certain books and manuscripts which are to be found only at the British Museum and in the Oxford Library. His "History of the Gypsies" has progressed rapidly of late, but he cannot go on without this material, and so we are to lose him from our circle for a few weeks. He will return, however, before the time for Miss Dillard's *début*, and meantime she can study without his help, as the arrangements are all made, and she has become acquainted with the director and the principal singers of the Schneckenberg Opera.

Miss Fanshawe arrived the day after Mr. Montague's departure.

She more than fulfilled the expectations I had formed of her, being, in truth, an uncommonly interesting and attractive girl. She possesses that indefinable quality which we call fascination, although she does not make the least apparent effort to attract. She has no especial gift or talent to render her conspicuous, and yet when she is present, one forgets that Miss Burton is on the way to be an artist, and that Miss Dillard is prophesied of as "a second Patti"; Miss Fanshawe is the star around which we all revolve.

This evening Miss Dillard exclaimed, after regarding Miss Fanshawe long and earnestly :

"It seems as though I had seen you somewhere before!" And a little while afterwards she cried out: "Oh, now I know why your face is so familiar! My uncle has your photograph. He keeps a great box full of ladies' photographs, and I am sure yours is among them. Don't you know my uncle, Carter Montague?"

Miss Fanshawe coloured, as well she might, at these remarks, which were audible to the whole circle, but she answered quietly :

"Yes, I know Mr. Montague. Is he an uncle of yours?"

"Of course he is my uncle," was the answer. "He is staying here, waiting for my *début*, only just now he has gone to England."

Miss Fanshawe made no further inquiries, and the subject was dropped. Mrs. Lester was not in the room at the time, and I did not tell her that Miss Fanshawe was acquainted with our friend. I thought the young lady would mention the fact herself if she thought proper; but I could not help wondering whether there had been any particular intimacy between the two. I felt sure of one thing, that Miss Fanshawe was not the girl to mistake his intentions, and it seemed to me that she was just the one to suit his fastidious fancy. To be sure, she has no definite aim in life, and is not pursuing any particular art or science, but she is not wasting her time in frivolous amusements, and under certain circumstances it would seem to be a sufficient object for a woman

to make a man's home life happy, as I am sure she is capable of doing. However, there is no need of my speculating upon the matter, as probably neither of the pair ever thought of each other as a life-partner.

Miss Fanshawe has gone back to Venice, and we miss her very much. She seems pensive and perhaps rather inclined to melancholy, and yet there is a sweet sympathy in her ways which is better than the vivacity one is apt to expect in a young person. Mrs. Lester remarked after she had left that it was a pity Mr. Montague could not have met her. So I know that Miss Fanshawe did not mention her knowing him, and I do not feel at liberty to give the information. I wonder if it can be possible that he is the hero of the romance Mrs. Lester guesses at, and that Miss Fanshawe wished to avoid awaking the suggestion in the mind of her old friend! It is a good proof of Mrs. Lester's entire confidence in him that she is willing to bring the two together. She often speaks of him now, and regrets his prolonged absence. She said the other day that there was something especially chivalrous in his bearing, and something delightfully feminine in the character of his niece.

"She is not very brilliant," Mrs. Lester continued, "unless it is on her high notes, and yet her innocence and helplessness are very attractive. How sweetly she prattles about her good grandmother, and her hope of rejoicing the old lady's heart by her success; whereas, most girls would be thinking whether their stage costumes would be becoming, and whether all the young men in the audience were going to be vanquished by their voices!"

I had a curious experience yesterday! I spent the day in Schneckenberg with some American friends who were stopping at the Grand Hotel, and sent for me to meet them there. We drove out in the afternoon to "*Hilda's Ruh*" where I had often

been in summer with the Beaumonts and the Urwalds. The landlady at the little inn remembered me, and while we were all warming ourselves and taking refreshments in the parlour, she came and called me out into the hall to ask me privately whether I knew an American lady by the name of Baxter, and whether she was a respectable person.

"Certainly she is respectable," I answered. "Why should you doubt it?"

She then told me that Mrs. Baxter had come there the day before with her daughter, and had taken a room with an adjoining alcove which was used as a bedroom, and that late in the evening Prince Wandelstern had come to visit them and had remained all night. Such doings could not be allowed in her house, and she was about to warn Mrs. Baxter to leave when I arrived, but she thought it better to consult me first. On learning that Mrs. Baxter was now in her room, and that the prince had returned to Schneckenberg by an early train, I excused myself to my friends and went upstairs to seek an explanation of the shocking story. I found Mrs. Baxter alone, and lost no time in telling her what I had heard, and asking her what it all meant.

She burst out laughing, and exclaimed :

"These stupid Germans ! They are enough to drive one wild ! Now, you just listen to me," she continued, "and you will see in a moment that there is nothing wrong. Jessie and I came out here for a little change, and had no idea of meeting the prince. We thought he was gone off hunting, and so he was, but he got caught in a rainstorm in the woods and came here to get dry. When he found that we were in the house he came up to see us, and stayed so long that when he went to the station the last train had gone and it was pouring rain again, and so he came back to the house, and every room was taken, and when he said he didn't know what he should do I said, 'Why, you can sleep here on our sofa !' and he was glad enough to stay. We left him the lamp and some books to read, and then lit our candle and went off to bed in the alcove—you see it has glass doors—and we shut the doors together and locked them and

hung up our waterproof cloaks over the glass so that he could not see in if he tried, and in the morning when we got up he was already gone. He left a little note thanking us for our hospitality, and saying he was going back by the first train to Schneckenberg. Now, that is the whole story, and I should like to know where the harm is in it!" she said triumphantly.

I was aghast at the woman's simplicity. "Harm enough in it!" I exclaimed. "You know and I know that you are innocent, but if the story gets out your daughter is ruined, for nobody will believe the truth about the matter."

"Well, they must be a dreadful set around here!" was her reply. "But they won't know anything about it, for the prince said nobody saw him come in the second time, and he went away before daylight. By the way, how did you come to know that he was here?"

"The landlady told me. One of the servants was washing the stairs when the prince went away this morning, and you would have been ordered out of the house if I had not convinced the landlady that you were not guilty of anything worse than imprudence. But such imprudence! Is it possible that you do not know better than to compromise yourself and your daughter in such a way? The prince knew that he was doing wrong, if you did not, and his conduct ought to convince you that his intentions are not honourable."

"Now you mustn't say a word against him!" remonstrated Mrs. Baxter. "I tell you he is a good, innocent boy, if he *is* a prince, and he took my invitation as it was meant, and just slept like a kitten on that sofa all night. What could he do? The last train was gone and the house was full, and it was raining as hard as it could pour!"

"He could have stayed in the public parlour," I replied; "or at the station, or stood up under a tree all night, or hired a horse to carry him to Schneckenberg—anything, rather than compromise you as he has done."

"The idea of the landlady talking of turning me out of the house!" pursued Mrs. Baxter. "I should like to see her try it!"

I am ready to go before any court in Christendom and swear on the Bible how it all happened."

"But can't you see any impropriety in his staying here, especially as you were strangers to the rest of the people in the house?"

"No, I can't," she answered stoutly. "I did just as I would be done by, and I am sure his mother would thank me if she knew about it. He might have caught his death if he had gone away!"

"There is no danger of his suffering," I insisted. "He has money to pay for all the comforts he needs, and you are not responsible for his safety; but you are responsible for your daughter's good name, and she is already lowered in the prince's eyes, just because he knows how his conduct will be judged by others."

This argument had no effect upon Mrs. Baxter, but she declared her intention of returning to Schneckenberg by the next train if her daughter should return from her walk in time, as they certainly would not stay a moment longer than necessary in a house where people could be so mean as to suspect them of improper behaviour!

This incident has led me to thinking a great deal about abstract right and wrong, and wondering how far one is justified in following out innocent intentions, irrespective of outside opinion. I am sure, however, that Mrs. Baxter is very imprudent, while I have less confidence than ever in the purposes of Prince Wandelstern. And although I give Mrs. Baxter credit for entire innocence of motive in this affair, still I am convinced that she is not always so simple as she is willing to appear, and that she encourages the intimacy of the prince with her daughter, in the hope of entangling him so far that he cannot in honour draw back.

Mrs. Baxter is a puzzle to me; her actions are so at variance with her words! She professes to be very pious, and whenever she meets with any one willing to talk about experimental religion she really seems to enjoy the conversation; and yet she is flying in the face of the commandments all the time. She slanders her

neighbours; she takes every possible advantage of those she imagines her rivals or her daughter's, and shows the most reckless disregard of truth in the little affairs of every-day life. She claims to be a good republican; and yet she is ready to bow down to anybody who has a title. She pretends to have a horror of the Romish religion, and yet she is willing to marry her only child to a Catholic and run the risk of having all her descendants educated in that obnoxious faith. She says she prays continually that she may be led aright in managing her daughter; and yet she has told that daughter so many lies that the girl evidently does not believe a word she says, and feels no scruple about telling lies in her turn.

They are a precious pair! And I can neither help nor hinder them in their chosen course; but I think I could feel more charity towards them if the cloak of religious hypocrisy were not thrown over all their nonsensical doings.

I wish Miss Dillard would not spend so much time in writing letters! I never noticed the habit until Mr. Montague went away, and when I ventured to remonstrate with her this morning on the subject, she said her uncle wanted her to write regularly and tell him everything that happened during his absence.

"But nothing does happen," I said. "You are going on in the usual quiet way, and a few lines once a week would do just as well. It must be bad for your chest to stoop over your portfolio so much, and the time you devote to writing would be more profitably spent in studying music, it seems to me."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I daresay it would," she replied, "but uncle is very particular about me, and he says I am young and alone, and far from home, and he must take my grandmother's place in watching over me. Perhaps he is afraid I shall get into mischief if I don't confess every step I take. Maybe he thinks I shall elope with somebody, Mr. Parkhurst, for instance!"

She laughed merrily at the idea ; but I do not quite like her way of talking sometimes, and so I merely said :

“Your uncle writes to me, too, occasionally, and when I answer his last letter, I shall suggest that you are doing too much work in that line for your own good.”

“Oh, please, don’t !” she exclaimed, “he will think I have been complaining, and then he will be angry ! And you don’t know how angry he can be when he tries !”

Just here I remembered his warning against interfering with his private affairs, and I assured her that I would not mention the subject. And as if in defiance of my advice, she has been writing almost all day. She receives almost as many letters as she sends ; I suppose he gives her minute advice upon every point of her conduct. One queer thing about it is that she always insists upon posting her letters herself. Last week she had a cold and did not go out of the house for three days. I offered to take any letters to the box for her, but she said there was no hurry, and just after dark, as I was returning from a long walk, I met her near the gate with the letters in her hand, going towards the street-box. I begged her to let me do the errand for her, but she refused, and said she needed a breath of fresh air, and had made the letters an excuse for going out. Another curious thing about the correspondence is that Mr. Montague’s letters to Hattie are always sealed with sealing-wax, although hers are not to him, and his are not to me. I have seen him write letters many a time, but I never knew him use sealing-wax before.

Louisa Burton has been summoned by telegraph to Brussels, to meet a family of relations from America. Mrs. Lester wanted to go with her, thinking it not safe for her to travel alone ; but Louisa would not hear to her exposing herself in this cold weather, and when the time came Mrs. Lester was suffering from an attack of neuralgia in her head, and was really unable to go. Of course, after having come all the way from America to this place, Louisa is in no danger on this comparatively short journey.

Mrs. Lester has rather adopted Louisa, as I have Hattie, and we both feel happier for having a special interest in some individual whom we can advise and assist. She will miss her *protégée*; but we all think the summons opportune, as Louisa has been working hard at her painting and needs a change.

Fortunately for Miss Dillard, there has been a new cast in several of the rôles in *Figaro's Hochzeit*, thereby necessitating more frequent rehearsals than usual. I always go with her to the theatre and enjoy myself hugely, shut up in one of the stage boxes, where I can watch the performance without being observed. The practising goes on by snatches, and of course each part loses much by the singers being in ordinary dress. I never realised before how much costumes and lights have to do with the effect of an opera ! There is to be a full dress rehearsal just before the public representation, and then we are all going to see the fun. The others will be in the body of the house, but I am to stay with Hattie behind the scenes, to help her dress and make her feel more at home. And when she sings in public I shall have still more to do ; for some of her former mates at the music school have filled her head with the necessity of keeping up her strength, and so she is to take a raw egg just before she begins to sing, and a warm soup between the principal acts, and drink a little red wine every time she comes off the stage. I am willing to attend to all these items, but I must say I do not believe in such rules ; for it is generally considered best to abstain from eating a good while before singing. If Hattie is to be "a second Patti," it seems to me it would be wise to follow the first Patti's practice in this respect, which is, I believe, to drink a cup of strong broth two or three hours before going to the theatre, and then not touch a drop or a morsel until after the opera is over. But Miss Dillard thinks she must be refreshed more frequently, at least until she has become familiar with life on the stage, and, of course, it is best that she should try her own way first.

Louisa Burton has returned, but the journey has not done her the good we hoped it would. She is more gloomy than ever, and shuns our society as much as possible. There must be some great trouble in the past or present of her family history. Mrs. Lester and I have watched to see whether she seemed embarrassed about pecuniary matters, in which case we could relieve her. But she seems to have plenty of money. She is so reserved that we cannot venture to ask her outright what grieves her. Very likely a relation of hers has fallen into some crime or disgrace. Her mournfulness is a strong contrast to Hattie's busy excitement. Hattie seems not to have a doubt of her brilliant success, and I trust she is correct in her estimate of her own abilities. It makes me smile sometimes to hear her naïve chatter. She told me the other day a number of anecdotes of her childhood, and finished by remarking that by-and-bye, when she had become a celebrated singer, I might want to write her life !

She may be as simple as she chooses, if she will only retain her innocence of spirit amidst the temptations of her public career !

That reminds me of another of her remarks. She was talking about the necessary familiarity with the tenor singers, and saying that nearly all the rôles she was likely to take contained the development of a romance.

"Of course I don't mind the love-making on the stage," she said. "That has got to be, and we shall both feel so anxious about our voices that we sha'n't care any more for each other than as though we were two broom-sticks ; but if any of those men attempt to be familiar off the stage, they'll repent of it !"

She then told me that her grandmother was at first much opposed to her singing in opera, and after she had yielded to Mr. Montague's advice, had written many letters, giving her granddaughter the most minute counsel as to her conduct. One direction was that if any of the male singers ventured to insult her by word or deed, she should "slap him on the mouth" without hesitation.

"And I'll do it, too !" was Hattie's comment on the rather primitive prescription.

Among Miss Dillard's professional acquaintances in Schneckenberg is a young lady who seems to have taken a great fancy to our *débutante*, and has given her many good suggestions as regards the dramatic features of *Cherubino's* part. Fräulein Rehfeld is not a singer, she is an actress, and, is said to be irresistible in light comedy. She is a great favourite with the public, and is an object of peculiar interest to the whole dramatic corps, from the fact that in private life she is known to be suffering from a profound and perpetual melancholy. This morbid state has now lasted several years, and, it is feared, may develop into hopeless insanity.

She comes out occasionally to see Hattie, and we are all much impressed with her noble deportment, which is suggestive of great dramatic power, and yet is not what is called "theatrical." There is a settled sadness in her looks and tones which is in strange contrast to her exuberant physical beauty. I cannot help wondering whether some blight has fallen upon so perfect a flower, or whether the worm is at the root of the plant—in other words, whether she has had some individual trouble, sufficiently important to darken her outlook upon life, or has inherited a taint of gloom from some unhappy ancestor. The longer I live the more thankful I am for having been born with a cheerful disposition, so that now, after everything has happened which is likely to happen to me, excepting death, I am able to feel resigned, if not content.

Miss Dillard was chattering as usual after dinner to-day about her prospects for "a grand success," and Mrs. Lester being, I presume, tired of the subject, exclaimed :

"Oh, you will probably be married in a year or two, and forget all about your singing!"

"No, indeed," protested Miss Dillard, "I do not want to marry. I am wedded to my art."

This stereotyped expression sounded rather pathetic to me, as I thought of so young a girl voluntarily renouncing the pleasures of a home life for the uncertain triumphs of a public career.

"That is a wise conclusion," answered Mrs. Lester, "if you really wish to succeed as a singer, for your voice is not strong, and if you were to marry and have children, you would probably lose it early."

Hattie looked up quite frightened.

"Do you think so?" she asked anxiously.

"Yes, I do think so," was the reply; "but as you do not intend to marry, it is of no consequence, and for the rest, what your voice lacks in strength it makes up for in sweetness."

This compliment seemed to restore Hattie's equanimity, and she sat down with a smiling face to her everlasting letter-writing. Happening to glance around after a few moment's of silence, I saw Mrs. Lester regarding the girl with an intent and serious expression which I had never seen on her face before. When we were alone I ventured to ask her why she was watching Hattie so earnestly.

"It is nothing, and I am ashamed of myself!" she answered hastily.

"Are you really afraid that her voice is going to break down?" I inquired.

"No, not if she is careful," was the reply, in quite a different tone, which greatly relieved me, for I am beginning to be nervous about Miss Dillard's prospects.

Yesterday, being obliged to go to Schneckenberg to do some shopping, I called on the Baxters. Jessie was not at home, and so Mrs. Baxter settled down to what she called "a real good talk." But we were soon interrupted by the entrance of the servant with a card and a fancy basket full of choice hot-house flowers. Mrs. Baxter took the things and sent the servant away.

"Now, just look here!" she exclaimed, "Prince Wandelstern has sent these flowers to Jessie, and I don't like it at all. He is beginning to act too much like a lover, and I am going to put a stop to such nonsense. Jessie is too young to think of being married, and he is a prince and must marry a princess, I suppose.

I won't have those flowers here! If Jessie sees them it will flatter her vanity, and then I can't do anything with her. I am just going to send them back with a note, and tell the prince he mustn't do such things any more."

"Don't let me be a hindrance to you," I said. "If you are going to send the flowers back you must hurry, or Jessie will come in."

"Poor flowers!" she murmured, "they don't mean any harm, and they are too lovely for anything! But I am determined that Jessie shall not see them."

She kept going round and round the table, examining the beautiful bouquet from different points of view, and wondering what the prince would say to her sending them back.

"What do you think about it?" she asked.

"I told you long ago what I thought about your acquaintance with the prince, and I have not changed my opinion."

While I was speaking Jessie opened the door. After hastily greeting me she turned to the table.

"What lovely flowers! Where did they come from?" she asked, while her heightened colour and sparkling eyes betrayed her suspicion of the giver.

"You needn't waste your time looking at them," said her mother, "for I'm going to send them right straight back."

Then followed reproaches, expostulations, beseechings, and finally tears on Miss Jessie's part, and when I took my leave the storm was nearly over. The girl had triumphed, and the flowers were in no danger of banishment.

Mr. Montague returned last evening, looking wretchedly ill from the effects of a cold taken on the journey, and this morning he was obliged to keep his bed and send for a doctor.

Mr. Montague is very ill, and two doctors from Schneckenberg have been here to consult with the village physician. We are all

exceedingly anxious, and so must some other person be, to judge from the frequent appearance of a servant in livery, with a note addressed to Mr. Montague, which he is, however, unable to read, and which the doctor puts out of sight in a drawer.

This morning I was sent for to see a stranger in the parlour, an English lady, elegantly dressed and closely veiled, who apologised for her intrusion on the ground of her anxiety to hear of Mr. Montague's condition.

"As I have received no reply to my notes of inquiry," she said, "I decided to come myself. If you knew the circumstances, I am sure you would consider me justified in taking such a step."

I was glad to be able to inform her that, although very weak, and quite unable to read or answer letters, the patient was now considered out of danger and would probably soon be well enough to thank her in person for her kind interest in his welfare.

She then went away, without giving me her name or address, and I was left to ponder over the mysterious visitor and wonder whether she were another victim of over-heated maiden fancies, or whether my fastidious friend had discovered in this daughter of Albion that rare combination of womanly delicacy with practical capacity for which he has been looking so long in vain.

Last evening we all went to the grand rehearsal of *Figaro's Hochzeit*. Mr. Montague, though still weak and pale from his recent illness, was able to be present, and we persuaded Mademoiselle Nina Romanska to join our party, Frau Wartheim having kindly offered to stay with the old countess during the daughter's absence. Mr. Montague and I occupied one of the boxes near Hattie's dressing-room, and she sat there with us when not obliged to be on the stage. She was in fine spirits, but complained of fatigue, and I fancied she was not quite satisfied with me, because I had not brought any refreshments for her. But I did not suppose she would want anything at the rehearsal, as she

had eaten a good supper before going to the theatre. However, her uncle made up for all deficiencies by going out after the first act and buying her a small bottle of wine and a bunch of delicious grapes.

The rehearsal went off very well, and the prospect seems fair for a fine performance in public. Day after to-morrow is the time for Hattie's first appearance. I shall shake in my shoes until it is well over !

This morning I went into Schneckenberg to buy some little things required by Hattie, and the first thing I saw staring me in the face as I passed along the street was the theatre bill, with Hattie's name in great black letters :

"Cherubino. Frl. Dillard als Gast. Erstes Auftreten."

My heart was full of sympathy, and the tears filled my eyes so fast that I was obliged to go into a neighbouring church and sit down in a dark corner and cry, before I could venture to attend to my commissions in the shops. It seemed such an undertaking for so young and inexperienced a girl, and then so much depends upon the impression she makes at first ! For she has strong hopes of securing an engagement in this theatre, which would be a pretty sure passport to a successful career, while failure would involve the disarrangement of all her uncle's plans and leave her to the wearying uncertainties of a beginner's usual experience.

I hope Hattie does not feel as nervous as I do about the evening's work. She is now in her room, lying down after her early dinner, and I have just been the rounds to see that everything is in readiness for going to the theatre. I had a good deal of trouble getting the apparatus and material for her refreshments to fit into my travelling-bag. The frame of the spirit lamp takes up so much room, and I have to be so careful that nothing is broken ! But now it is all in order and I count the things over and over to be sure that nothing is left out. There is the lamp, and the

bottle of alcohol, the tin pail of soup, a paper of salt, a fresh egg and a cup to hold it, a bottle of wine, a wine glass, and a bunch of grapes. Surely that must be all !

It is over ! And, so far as I can tell, with good success. I am so thankful !

I shall never forget how my heart beat when the curtain went up and I heard the first sounds of the baritone voice counting : "*Fünfe*," "*zehne*," "*zwanzig*," "*dreissig*," "*sechs-und-dreissig*," for although there was still a short respite for Hattie, she was fully committed, and must appear at the appointed time.

Before I knew it she was on the stage, looking very pretty in her Page's dress, and apparently feeling quite at her ease. The *Susanna* was a charming singer and actress, and her skilful address smoothed over whatever was lacking in the manner of the *débutante*. The well-known arias sounded just as they did in the Pension parlour. Hattie's voice was sweet and clear, and showed careful training, but there was something lacking in the tones, and what fervour she showed was not sufficiently spontaneous. We have all heard the "*Ihr, die ihr Triebe*" ("*Voi, che sapete*") and the "*Neue Freude, neue Schmerzen*" (*non so più*) attempted hundreds of times by amateurs of various degrees of incapacity, and Hattie's rendering was far superior to any such effort. But I have heard these arias sung as they ought to be by *Frau Vogl* in Munich, and so I confess to some disappointment in the present instance. These are the test pieces in Cherubino's rôle ; all the rest is easy and of no great importance. Hattie seemed to me to play her part sufficiently well in the lively scene in the countess's chamber, and her voice was still fresh in the exquisite garden aria. I had hard work to keep her from talking all the time between the acts. She was in a very gay humour, and flew about among the singers, instead of resting quietly in her dressing-room. She wanted the soup warmed and ready for her after the first act ; but when the time came she would not touch it. She drank the raw egg, however, and washed it down with red wine, and ate her

grapes with a good appetite, all of which was quite enough in the way of food, I thought.

The theatre was full and the applause satisfactory. Mrs. Armstrong had interested herself beforehand in drumming up all the Americans in Schneckenberg, and the consul, with his whole family, occupied a conspicuous box and waved their handkerchiefs loyally after Hattie had finished her arias. I saw the Ryders in one of the grandest boxes. They were dressed in black from head to foot, the Court being now in mourning for some insignificant princeling or other. However, they patronised their own country to the degree of assisting by their presence at the *début* of an American, which is more than we expected of them.

Altogether, we felt well pleased at the result of the undertaking, and when we were all at home again in the Pension parlour we kissed Hattie and congratulated her, and made much of her on account of the good courage she had shown and the credit she had done us as her compatriots. After she had gone the rounds her uncle called out, "Well, I think I deserve a kiss, too!" and she flew to his arms and gave him an affectionate embrace. I was glad to see her show so much feeling; for he has been indefatigable in her behalf. This little incident reminded me of what Mrs. Lester saw of their conduct at Homburg. I presume Hattie was home-sick or unhappy about something, and he was trying to soothe her by innocent endearments. I have always admired the dignity of his bearing towards her, and the freedom from familiarity on the part of both uncle and niece. On this occasion he certainly deserved a kiss more than any of the rest of us.

I had my own little private grievance in connection with this great event. When I went to unpack my travelling-bag after we had all retired to our rooms, I thought it felt remarkably light, and on lifting out the tin pail I found it empty. The soup was gone, though it was there just before we left the theatre. I remembered then that the bag had been partially pushed off my lap by Mr. Montague as he entered the carriage, and on examining my dress

I discovered to my dismay that the whole front breadth of my new grey silk was soaked with the greasy liquid ! I felt almost provoked at Hattie for a few moments ; she might at least have drunk the soup, after having insisted upon my carrying it, in opposition to my advice. But I soon reasoned with myself that the injury to my dress was of small moment compared with the success of her *début*, which might have been impaired by the imbibing of all that rich broth.

To-day is a kind of holiday for us all. We need rest after the anxiety of the past month and the excitement of last evening, and then there is enough to talk about to keep our thoughts and our tongues busy for a week. We have the opera in all its charming details to discuss, and Hattie's part in it to reconsider with especial interest. She keeps us fully employed answering her questions :

"How did I look when I first came out?" "Did my voice tremble when I began?" "How did I act the love-making with Susanna?" "Did I look languishing enough at the countess?" "Was I cuddled up all right in the chair?" And so forth, and so on.

She received encouraging replies from us ladies, but by-and-bye Mr. Montague came in, and then the scene changed for poor Hattie.

He began by telling her that she must learn to act better, or she never could produce an effect. He then went on with a minute criticism of her performance.

"You mustn't wriggle your head about when you are covered up in the chair. Susanna was obliged to push you back two or three times, because you could be so plainly seen."

"I was stifling," murmured Hattie, in excuse.

"Then stifle, or else find a breathing-place at the back of the chair ! And you witch about too much when Susanna is putting on the cap. You ought to glance around at the countess once in a while, but not keep your head flying like a weather cock in a high wind.

And when you are disguised as a peasant-girl you needn't walk like a cow: no boy walks in that way. You must take long steps, but you mustn't stick out your knees so awkwardly."

Hattie began to cry, and we were sorry that he was so severe; but his fault-finding was no doubt just, and it is better that she should be corrected at the beginning; otherwise she might imagine that she knows all about acting and so become careless with regard to that important feature of her performance.

The opera is to be given four times, so that all the people who rent seats at the theatre can have an opportunity of hearing it. This is an excellent thing for Hattie, much better than to try a new opera each time, and no more favourable music for the voice than Mozart's can be found, that is certain.

We have had a dissipated life for the past two weeks. We have been four times to hear *Figaro's Hochzeit*, and the director was so kind as to send six free tickets to all the operas performed during the time, so we have given ourselves up to musical recreation. Mr. Montague and Hattie, Mrs. Lester, Louisa Burton and I profited by five of the free tickets, and the sixth was unanimously bestowed upon Mademoiselle Nina Romanska, who seemed to enjoy this glimpse of the world of art and fashion, from which she has so long been excluded. The other boarders went too, and we hired an extra omnibus to bring us home every night.

Hattie's performance was substantially the same throughout. The glaring faults pointed out by her uncle were corrected, but her manner of singing was unchanged, correct and sweet, but mechanical and cold.

There was less applause after the first night; I suppose because fewer Americans were present, those who attended the *début* being probably strangers passing through the city. Several of these called upon her, to offer special congratulations. Among them was Harry Barnard, the son of an old friend of mine. I was very glad to see him, and he stayed after the others and went with me to my room to have a more particular conversation. After answer-

ing my inquiries about his relatives at home, he suddenly asked :

"Why does Miss Dillard keep her maiden name, and where is her husband?"

"Her husband!" I repeated in astonishment; "why, she isn't married!"

"Not married! Then she ought to be," he said.

"What do you mean?" I asked sternly.

"I thought she had a child," he answered with some hesitation.

"What an idea!" I exclaimed impatiently. "Pray where did you ever meet her, and what do you know about her?"

"I never was acquainted with her," he answered, "but I saw her often in Berlin while she was in the music school. And once I saw her afterwards—at a little village in the Harz mountains—and I thought she was living there in retirement for a while," he added significantly.

"Then you were very much mistaken. It must have been some body else. She is an innocent country girl, who came to Europe direct from the strict care of a good grandmother, and she has only just finished her studies in the music school. Don't for Heaven's sake repeat any such wild suspicion, and get it out of your own head as fast as you can! If you only knew the girl you would realise how absurd your suggestion is. I never in my life saw a woman of her age so ignorant and undeveloped as regards the emotional part of human nature, as she is!"

He seemed ashamed of his random conclusions, and turned the conversation to a more agreeable theme.

I wish that all young men were as good as Harry Barnard. There is one gay young American spending the winter in Schneckenberg, who appears to be stage-struck with Hattie, and may, I fear, become obtrusive in his attentions. I went with her the other day to do some shopping, and we met this Mr. Van Corliss at a restaurant where we took dinner. He came to our table and urged us to let him send for a bottle of champagne, and on our decided refusal, he asked Hattie if she would not take a

little whisky. She was shocked, and informed him that she never used that beverage, whereupon he laughed and said :

"Oh, well, I will give you just five years to come to it. All the singers use whisky !"

I am sure that is not true ; for singers are, as a rule, very temperate, and even abstemious, as regards eating and drinking ; they have to be, in order to preserve their voices.

Another time Mr. Van Corliss came out to call, and Hattie not being at home, he sat down to chat with me. His talk was mostly about Hattie, her sweet tones, and her agreeable appearance on the stage.

"But," he added, "she is a mere child. She knows too little about life to make a great singer. It would be a charity to teach her what is going on in the world, so that she would put a little more *vim* into her voice !"

I suppose he considers it his mission to impart such knowledge ; but I shall do my best to keep her out of his way, and if he comes around too often I shall appeal to Mr. Montague to put an end to his visits.

I do feel a little anxious about Hattie in one respect. I think that without knowing it she drinks too much wine. If she feels hoarse, she takes wine as a cure ; if she is tired, or depressed, or nervous, she takes wine to set her up again. This is a dangerous habit, and when stimulants come to be resorted to as a panacea for the numerous troubles of a stage life, I fear the result may be disastrous.

During those evenings at the theatre, I used often to scan the audience through my opera glass to see whether I could distinguish the mysterious English girl who had shown such interest in Mr. Montague during his illness. But I did not see any one who reminded me at all of her. Probably she was only staying a short time in Schneckenberg and went away before Hattie's *début*.

I have not ventured to mention the subject to Mr. Montague. The letters she sent must have told him all he wished to know, and he will never need to give me a second warning not to interfere with his affairs.

The last time that Hattie sang I was with him behind the scenes when Fräulein Rehfeld came to speak to me. She did not see him at first, as he stood in the shadow of a pillar, and on becoming aware of his presence she blushed a vivid scarlet up to the roots of her hair. He bowed and I introduced him. He said at once, "Oh, Fräulein Rehfeld and I are old acquaintances," and she, with a strong effort, subdued her emotion and replied in her usual manner. I do not believe that Hattie knows of their previous acquaintance; perhaps that is the secret of Fräulein Rehfeld's attraction to Miss Dillard; or, what is more likely, Mr. Montague meant that he had met Fräulein Rehfeld before at the theatre, as he has sometimes gone there with Hattie when I have not accompanied them.

Poor Hattie is not to be engaged for the Schneckenberg opera, after all! The director considers her too inexperienced as a singer and actress, and advises her to begin with some smaller theatre and gradually work her way upward. This is good advice, and it is the way great Prima Donnas were formerly developed. Nowadays, a *débutante* wishes to astonish the world at the outset, by appearing in the most difficult rôles, and the result is almost always a failure.

Mr. Montague is now busy writing to managers in all directions, hoping to get Miss Dillard established soon, as he is obliged to return to America before summer.

Hattie is, meanwhile, depressed and irritable, inclined to blame everybody but herself for the disappointment, and worrying us all by her frequent threats of throwing herself into the lake, if she does not get an engagement speedily.

A favourable answer has just reached Mr. Montague from Riga, and he is to start with Hattie for that northern city without delay. Fortunately, she has acquaintances there already, the family of one of her fellow-pupils at the music school, and Mr. Montague is in hopes of being able to place her under their care. It seems hard to let her go out into the world by herself; but she has no misgivings, and is wild to be on the way. I almost wish she felt more sorry to part from us all; but her feelings have not yet been awakened, and she can think of nothing at present but her voice and her prospects for "a grand success." Years hence I presume she will look back and be grateful for the sympathy and care which we, although comparative strangers, have so lavishly bestowed upon her during the three months of her stay.

Mr. Montague and Hattie left this morning, and the house seems empty without them. Louisa Burton showed a great deal of grief at parting with Hattie, which surprised me, as she is usually very reserved in the expression of her feelings. She cried and sobbed a long time after the carriage drove off, until Mrs. Lester and I coaxed her to walk with us, and the fresh air and bright sunshine gradually restored her to some degree of cheerfulness. But she is very low-spirited all the time.

Mr. Montague writes that the situation at Riga will do very well for Hattie at present, and he has decided to leave her there. She is boarding in her friend's family, and will be well taken care of. He himself is soon to return to America for a few months, but expects to be in Europe again before the end of the year. He will probably settle in London or Paris, on account of the necessity of consulting the libraries for the prosecution of his work on the "History of the Gypsies."

Hattie enclosed a note in the letter, thanking me for past kindness and begging me to write her all the news.

I have just received a good-bye letter from Mr. Montague, written at Liverpool, with a general farewell message to all the Pension family. He has decided to cross on a sailing vessel, instead of a steamer, in order to get the advantage of a longer sojourn in sea air. He leaves to-night by the English ship *Mephistopheles*, bound for New York. He promises to write soon after his arrival and send his address, which he cannot decide upon beforehand.

May the winds and waves be favourable to his voyage! I never like to know of friends being on the ocean during the spring gales.

I have written a long letter to Hattie, telling her everything I could think of about everybody in the house, and also the news of Schneckenberg, especially concerning the operatic corps. Not that anything wonderful has happened since she went away; but I know the smallest item will interest her. I have begged her to write often, if only a postal card, to let me know whether she is well, and contented with her situation.

Louisa Burton is more melancholy than ever, and seems discouraged with her slow progress in her art studies. I think she misses the excitement of the last few weeks, and I wish the house would fill up with young people, which it is not likely to do before summer. Even the few boarders we have at present are going away. Mrs. Patten, a silly, fashionable woman from Philadelphia, left this morning. I had to laugh when her trunks were put on the waggon. She had had the name painted over into *Mrs. von Patten*! That is for the benefit of Berlin, whither she is going. She is always talking about "family," and is wild over titles. That reminds me of Mrs. Armstrong's English enemy, Mrs. Beauchamp, who insisted upon the servants addressing her little boy as "Herr Baron," and when asked whether he had a right to the title, she said that he was not an English baron, but that his social position was such that if he had been a German he

would have been a "baron !" This is ridiculous enough ; but snobbery is the natural outcome of the English social system ; it is unnatural and inexcusable in American character.

Mrs. Manners returns to Paris. Mrs. Armstrong and her son go to Switzerland for the summer and then to their home in America. Mr. Parkhurst stays on ; but he is more moody and silent than ever.

The house is lonely ; the piano is shut, and we are apt to retire to our rooms after supper, instead of congregating in the parlour, as formerly.

Meanwhile, Frau Wartheim is taking advantage of the lull in business to set her house in order for the approaching summer. The empty rooms are undergoing a thorough cleaning, and the glass court is occupied by a group of women from the village, to whom is accorded the disagreeable task of filling feather beds and picking over hair mattresses.

Spring is coming ! The thought lightens every care and softens every sad memory of the departed year. Surely there is no bodily frame so feeble that it is not conscious of some stirring of the pulses at the re-awakening of nature's life, no spirit so oppressed that it does not expand and soar upward with the spread of warm sunshine and the opening of a tenderer sky !

This morning I went out into the garden before breakfast to hunt for early violets, and Mrs. Lester, seeing me from her window, came down to enjoy the freshness of the morning with me. As we were standing near the gate, she pulled an opening leaf-bud from a lilac bush and said to me :

"The romance of my life is contained in the fragrance of these spring leaves !"

I know and love the faint, sweet odour, although it has no particular association for me.

Mrs. Lester went on with her story.

"When I was a very young girl," she said, "I once visited an aunt who lived in a seaport town and had a son who was a sailor.

He came home while I was there, and we became very good friends. I loved him dearly, and when he went away to join his ship we parted at the gate, and while we were talking he picked a sprig of the budding lilac and smelt of it and made me smell of it, and said it was his favourite perfume, and he often thought of it when far away from land. He dropped the sprig, and after he was gone I picked it up and put it away in a box, and I have it yet, after all these years ! ”

She paused a moment, lost in thought, and then continued, “ We never met again. He came home once in a while, and after a time left the sea and married in his native town and lived many years. But my home was far distant, and various circumstances kept us apart. I do not think he ever loved me. I was merely a pleasant little companion during his home visit. But my feeling for him was the first emotion of the kind I had ever experienced, and I could not forget it.”

I was very thankful to Mrs. Lester for giving me this glimpse of her early life. Of all things, I enjoy hearing love stories, the real heart experiences of the people I meet. And yet I often wonder that they tell such things. I am sure no warmth of friendship, no fulness of confidence, could ever draw from me the short history of my own disappointment, the confession of the silly, yet innocent mistake which blighted all my youthful hopes.

I shall never see the swelling buds of a lilac bush again without thinking of Mrs. Lester's early dream of love !

It is now nearly two months since Mr. Montague sailed, and it must be time to hear from him. Hattie has not answered my letter. I suppose she is busy, so I shall not trouble her with any more long journals until I hear from her.

Mrs. Lester has gone to Venice to spend a week or two with Honora Fanshawe. She tried to induce Louisa Burton to go

with her, and we all advised Louisa to accept the invitation, as we thought such a change would be the best cure for her deepening melancholy. But she was deaf to all persuasion, and as her chief reason for declining was the necessity of finishing a picture which she hopes to send to America this spring, we were obliged to desist from urging her.

This morning I received a call from Frau Rehfeld, the mother of Fräulein Rehfeld the actress. She excused her visit on the ground of her daughter's anxiety to hear of Hattie's welfare, she not having written as yet, although she promised to write. I was ashamed of Hattie's negligence and sorry that I could give no information beyond the contents of Mr. Montague's letters and Hattie's one little wee note. Frau Rehfeld asked about Mr. Montague's plans for the future, and whether I thought he was likely to marry soon. I told her I was entirely ignorant of his private affairs beyond his expectation of returning to Europe, though not to this place. It seems they did know him several years ago in Leipzig. I wonder whether he can be to blame for, or rather, be the innocent cause of, Fräulein Rehfeld's morbid melancholy!

Mrs. Baxter has written me a mysterious note, asking me to come as soon as possible and spend the day with her, as she has "lots" to tell me. I have no desire to spend a whole day with the Baxters, but I have been owing them a call a long time, and so I will go in to-morrow afternoon and hear what Mrs. Baxter has to say.

I found Mrs. Baxter and Jessie in excellent spirits. They gave me a hearty welcome, and after a little general conversation Mrs. Baxter said :

"Come now, Jessie, put on your things and take a run in the fresh air, while we stay here together and have a confab."

Jessie laughed knowingly and obeyed, and as soon as she was out of sight her mother began the story.

"You remember the day you were here and the flowers came from the prince, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, that was the beginning of the serious business, and it has been growing more and more serious ever since, and a few days ago he made Jessie a formal offer, and now they are engaged. He has given her a lovely ring!"

"Has the betrothal been published?"

"No. They prefer to keep it to themselves. He thinks our custom is much nicer than the Germans'."

"Do his parents know about it?"

"That's the very thing I wanted to explain, because you have always been so suspicious of that poor boy. Yes, they do know about it, and they are delighted."

"Are you sure they know?"

"Yes. I took good care of my own dignity and Jessie's, in such an important matter. I wasn't going to throw my daughter at anybody's head, and so I told the prince that I should not give my consent unless his parents expressed their desire for the match, and he wrote to them and in a few days he received a beautiful letter sending all sorts of sweet messages, and welcoming Jessie into their family as politely as though she had been a born princess herself!"

"Have you the letter?"

"No. The prince read it to us and showed it to us, with their names signed and all, but he said it was better that he should keep it, as he must show it with his other papers when he comes to be married. But I saw it with my own eyes, and read all their titles—a long string of them—and the letter was sealed with their crown and coat of arms. I assure you it is all right. Don't you believe it now?"

"I believe that you saw the letter, but I don't believe it was written by the prince's parents."

"Well, you are a regular 'Thomas' for unbelief! Why, we were going to be presented to them only last week. They were to meet us at Hoheneck on their way to their castle in the country, and we went out there with the prince on purpose to see them."

"And did you see them?"

"No. The princess was taken suddenly ill at Vienna, where they have been spending the winter. But they meant to come."

Then followed a long discussion; I trying to convince Mrs. Baxter that the whole thing was a hoax, and warning her to be more watchful than ever now that there was a real, or pretended, engagement between her daughter and the prince, and she bringing forward all manner of proofs and arguments to win me over to a belief in his sincerity. It ended as such discussions are apt to —by each party holding fast to previous opinions; but we did not quarrel, and when I proposed returning home, Mrs. Baxter would not hear of my going, and insisted upon my staying to tea. She said she wanted me to be present at a *séance* they were going to hold in the evening for the amusement of the prince, he being much interested in spiritualism, and Mrs. Baxter having formerly been rather skilful in table-tipping and other introductory manifestations of that modern cult.

I felt no interest in amateur attempts at spirit-rapping; but I was rather curious to see the prince, and I hoped to be able to judge correctly of his intentions by his conduct during an informal visit.

Jessie came home at tea-time, rosy and radiant, escorted by her lover, who had met her, they both said, just at the door; though it is more probable that they had been walking together the whole afternoon. We had a sociable supper, and the prince seemed entirely at home. I remember he went to the cupboard himself after an extra fork for the cold meat, the servant having neglected to provide one. He is a sufficiently agreeable young man, but there is nothing striking about him; I know scores of American gentlemen much finer-looking and more interesting than he. It

is the fact of his being a prince that has bewitched Miss Jessie Baxter and her mother, and it is the beauty of the girl and the free and easy manners of both the ladies that have bewitched the prince (allowing him to be a good boy, without evil designs). He cannot be in earnest about the betrothal. If the Baxters were enormously wealthy it might be possible for a man in his position to barter his rank and the prospect of wedding with royalty for money; but he must see that these ladies are living on very limited means, and so there is but one explanation for the situation, desire for temporary amusement, to relieve the forced monotony of a university career.

After tea the table was cleared, and we all gathered round it to invoke the manifestations, under Mrs. Baxter's direction. Jessie sat next the prince at one side of the table, Mrs. Baxter and I opposite them. We all kept very still for a few moments; but presently Jessie began to fidget, and complained of a severe headache. She seemed to be really in pain, and her distress must have been genuine, because she soon yielded to her mother's suggestion to go and lie down in the bedroom. I suppose the truth is that she had walked herself almost to death while she was out with the prince. He rose to go away, but Jessie and her mother insisted upon his staying, and Jessie said she would come back, as soon as she had rested a little while. So he sat down again, and we put our hands upon the edge of the table and kept still.

By-and-bye the table seemed to creak and strain in all its separate fibres, and at last it did move a little, but whether through some unexplained magnetic force, or because we pressed upon it harder than we were conscious of doing, I cannot be sure.

Just then we heard a sudden scream from the bedroom, and Mrs. Baxter sprang up and hurried towards the door, which opened before she could reach it, and Jessie rushed into the room and sank into the chair beside the prince, crying out:

"Oh, I saw the light! I saw her face."

She screamed again and fell back into the prince's arms, as though about to faint away. Mrs. Baxter and I flew around for

water and cologne and a fan, though all the time I had a suspicion that the excitement was a trick on Miss Jessie's part, especially as she had let down her hair and changed her dress for a lovely rose-coloured wrapper trimmed with lace, in which she looked very charming, even to my old eyes.

After a few minutes she regained sufficient strength to sit upright, and she then began in a nervous, frightened voice to give an account of the disturbance.

"I was lying on the bed," said she, "trying to get over my headache, when suddenly I saw a great white light on the opposite wall, and while I was watching it it took the shape of a woman's face, a woman-angel, it seemed to me."

"Oh, la!" interrupted her mother; "I know what that was. I have seen it lots of times. Somebody brings a light into the room at the end of the house, and it shines through our window right into that great picture of Queen Louisa, behind the bedroom door."

"No, no, it wasn't that!" persisted Jessie. "Besides, the angel spoke to me, and it was what she said that frightened me most of all."

"Well, what did she say?" inquired Mrs. Baxter with more interest.

"She told me," began Jessie—then she stopped and blushed intensely, and finally burst out into a shriek which subsided into the alternate laughing and crying of real hysterics.

We laid her on the sofa and did all we could to soothe her. I advised giving her a sedative and putting her to bed, but Mrs. Baxter objected.

"She will go into fits if we make her stay in that room again," she said, "and it is better she should tell what the woman said to her, she will feel easier when it is off her mind."

Jessie recovered calmness sooner than I expected, and she insisted upon returning to her seat at the table and telling the rest of the story.

"She told me,"—again the girl hesitated and blushed, but this time she glanced at the prince with a smile, and took courage to

go on. "She told me that I should marry Prince Wandelstern and have three children, all boys, and that I should come very near dying when the second one was born, and she told me what I must take to make me get well—but it is no matter about that."

"I should think it *was* matter!" cried her mother in great excitement. "Jessie Baxter, I insist upon your telling me what she told you to take, now, right off, before you forget it!"

So Jessie repeated the prescription, and Mrs. Baxter ran and got her note-book and a pencil and wrote it down, word for word.

I could hardly believe my ears while Jessie was telling her story, and I did not know where to look when she had finished. To my great relief, the servant came in just then with some ice-cream and cake and wine which Mrs. Baxter had ordered, and we all tried to cheer up Jessie and make her forget the fright she had suffered.

The prince went away before I did, and after Jessie had bidden him a separate "good-night" in the hall, she was quite ready to undress and go to bed, as we advised. When her mother opened the parlour door to let the warm air go into the bedroom, the light happened to be on the wall, and she called us both to come and see it. There was the great luminous halo just as Jessie had described it, and in the centre Queen Louise in her white floating garments, descending the stairs to meet Napoleon. The picture *did* look rather ghostly, and I could see how the girl's imagination might have misled her, on first awakening from a feverish slumber.

"But she spoke to me! She told me what I told you!" persisted Jessie, and Mrs. Baxter said:

"Yes, that is the queer part of the story," instead of joining me in laughing the girl out of her superstitious nonsense.

I took my leave as soon as Jessie was safe in bed, and when Mrs. Baxter went with me into the hall to see me off, I told her in few words what I thought of the whole affair.

"My advice," I said in conclusion, "is not to dabble any more in spiritualism, unless you want your daughter to go crazy, and to separate her from the prince, unless you want to have her go through life with a broken heart."

I have found out that the only way to secure Mrs. Baxter's attention is to state matters in a very blunt fashion: her wits seem to be wool-gathering most of the time, and nothing less than a point-blank attack makes any impression upon her. I have made up my mind to have as little as possible to do with these people hereafter. I have said and done what I could to keep Jessie out of mischief, but it is of no use, and if they will not take advice they must learn from experience.

I would give a good deal to know what was passing in the prince's mind this evening, and whether he went away to join a party of young fellows of his own stamp and make them roar with laughter over the prophetic annunciation of his future paternal honours.

How that young girl could sit there and talk about marrying him and having three children, just as coolly as though she had been saying the most proper thing in the world!

I was so fortunate as to catch the last omnibus, and reached home tired and exhausted with a visit during which almost everything that was said and done had met with my disapproval, either silent or expressed. Everybody had retired excepting a sleepy chambermaid, who stayed up to let me in, and so I went immediately to my room.

Louisa Burton was not at breakfast this morning. I was afraid she might be suffering again from the headache which has troubled her recently, but Frau Wartheim says she came back from the studio later than usual yesterday, and, after staying up in her room a while, came down and went away again without speaking to anybody. Probably she was invited by her teacher's family to spend the evening and stay all night as she has often done before. But she ought to have left word as to her whereabouts. American girls are apt to be too independent in their ways. They come and go at their own sweet will, not being able to comprehend the anxiety which their elders feel at any unexpected absence. I shall walk to Schneckenberg this afternoon

and make inquiries at the studio if she does not come back before dinner.

We are in great distress about Louisa. She has not been at the studio since yesterday afternoon, and none of her acquaintances have seen her. And yet several of the villagers met her going towards the city after sunset last evening. One woman said she saw her in the cathedral during the vesper service. Louisa has been a good deal with Mademoiselle Nina of late ; I wonder whether she has begun to feel a leaning towards Catholicism ! I know she has been a regular attendant at the Anglo-American chapel in Schneckenberg, and as for going into the cathedral once in a while, we all do that.

Mademoiselle Romanska had not seen Louisa for two days before her disappearance. She showed me a little gold cross set with pearls which Louisa gave her about a week ago, saying that she should not stay here much longer, and she wanted Mademoiselle Nina to wear the cross and think of her sometimes when she was praying.

I felt relieved after hearing of this circumstance. After all, what do we know of Louisa's affairs ? She may have received a sudden message, like that of a few months ago, appointing a meeting with relatives or friends, in which case she will surely be thoughtful enough to let her acquaintances here know of her whereabouts as soon as possible. She has always been reserved, and very likely her depression of late is owing to some private sorrow of which we have no idea. If we do not see her or hear from her by to-morrow I shall telegraph to Mrs. Lester, though, very likely, just after the alarming message has been sent, Louisa will walk in and either laugh over our fright or be annoyed that we have disturbed the enjoyment of her absent friend. Perhaps she has gone to Venice to see the wonders of the place and return with Mrs. Lester. There are hundreds of ways of dispos-

ing of herself, any one of which would be perfectly sensible and right, only, she ought to have told where she was going, or at least said that she intended to stay away longer than usual.

Still no news ! once last night the outer bell rang violently, and we hoped that Louisa had come back. But when the servant reached the gate with a lantern nobody was to be seen. Probably some mischievous boy had rung the bell. I have telegraphed to Mrs. Lester. Louisa took the key of her room with her, but Frau Wartheim has a pass key and she opened the chamber this morning to see whether any letter or other message had been left to explain the disappearance. But everything was in its usual order. The trunks and bureau drawers were locked and not a scrap of paper was in sight. The police have been notified, and all the villagers are on the alert for tidings of the lost girl.

Mrs. Lester has telegraphed that she knows nothing of Louisa's recent movements. She herself is ill, but will return as soon as she is able to travel.

Last night there was a heavy storm. The wind howled and moaned around the house, sounding more dreary than ever, because of our present distress.

This afternoon I happened to look out of the window, and saw a great crowd of village people approaching the gate. I hurried down stairs, feeling sure that they had come to bring news of Louisa, and when I went out into the yard I met the procession coming in with bared heads in solemn silence, followed by four

men carrying a bier, upon which lay a figure covered with a black pall.

They set down the bier in front of the house and lifted the pall—and there lay Louisa, pale, dead, disfigured, her half-open eyes staring through a film of wet sand, her torn clothes dripping with the muddy ooze of the lake from which she had just been taken !

The horror of that sight, the mournfulness of the ensuing duties to the dead can never be forgotten. An official investigation was first made, and after it was over (the question still remaining unanswered whether death was due to accident or intention), the bruised and sodden corpse was given over to the care of mourning friends to be prepared for burial. There was some discussion as to the propriety of a *post-mortem* examination, and the decision was finally referred to me, as Miss Burton's most intimate acquaintance present. I decided at once in the negative, and nothing more was said on the subject. Remembering Mrs. Lester's fear of premature burial, I would have yielded, if there had been the least danger ; but the body had been in the water a long time and was bloated and disfigured almost beyond recognition.

Mrs. Lester returned before the time set for the funeral. She was very much overcome, and I was glad that she did not see the body until it was lying in the coffin, attired in a white garment, the open, staring eyes partly hidden under a profusion of flowers.

Louisa was buried in the graveyard of the village church. The English chaplain from Schneckenberg read the service, and there was a great crowd of strangers at the grave. The general impression is that her death was the result of an accident, as it was known that she often went to the end of the long pier to sketch a certain view of the mountains, of which she was particularly fond.

Mrs. Lester and I are drawn still more closely together through our mutual sorrow. It was our painful task to inform Louisa's

family of her death and to pack up all her belongings to send home. We did not examine her papers, nor meddle with anything, further than was necessary to provide for the safe delivery of her property into the hands of her friends.

Now that the trunks and boxes have been sent away, and all traces of Louisa's presence are obliterated, we often talk of her and mourn her untimely end.

The dreadful news has come that Mr. Montague was lost at sea on his voyage home! The *Mephistopheles* was wrecked on the banks of Newfoundland, and though several of the passengers and crew were saved, his name is among the lost!

The whole family is in grief over this new affliction, and to me it is as though a dear brother had been taken from me.

What nobleness of purpose, what capacity for accomplishment, what a wealth of beauty and agreeable qualities went down with that young life! And his literary work, from which he hoped to reap so much honour and fame—unfinished, unpublished, as it was, even that trace of his existence and his activity is lost to the world for ever.

Poor Hattie! What will she do, left alone at the beginning of her career, without the wise guidance of this good, devoted uncle? I must write to her at once and offer to go to her, or help her in any way she may need.

I made an astonishing discovery yesterday! Having occasion to clean out a drawer in my writing-table, I found, pushed back into the farthest corner, a sealed package addressed to me, and on opening it, another enclosure directed to Mrs. Lester, with a note to me, thanking me for all my kindness, and asking me to deliver or forward Mrs. Lester's letter without delay. The note was written by Louisa Burton, and dated on the day of her disappearance. I remember now that while I was getting ready to go with her to the omnibus that morning, she came into my room and

stood waiting near my writing-table. She must have come on purpose to dispose of the package. The drawer is very long and deep, and she had probably observed that I kept letters in it and did not often disturb its contents.

I hurried to Mrs. Lester's room with the precious package and left her to examine it alone.

After a while she called me to come to her. She was greatly excited, but said nothing, merely handed me a letter to read. She has since lent it to me to copy, and here it is :—

“MY DEAR AND KIND FRIEND,

“When you read these lines your unhappy and unworthy Louisa will be beyond the reach of your well-merited reproaches. I am going to destroy my life, because I cannot meet disgrace, I cannot any longer bear neglect, I cannot *breathe* in the same world with *him*, my betrayer. You have felt anxious about me because I have been in a depressed state of mind. It is because I know now how shamefully I have been deceived ; because I am certain that my seducer loves me no longer, and has no feeling of pity or sense of honour to which I can appeal. But although I hate and despise him for his cold-hearted abandonment of me, after breaking my heart and destroying my virtue, I blame myself still more for the folly and wickedness of which I have been guilty. If I had only responded more fully to *your* affection and had confided my love for Mr. Montague to your tender sympathy, you would have protected me from temptation, and he would not have dared to profess a devotion which was only assumed for the basest purpose. You will wonder when and where we found opportunities for becoming so intimate. Here, in this very house, he declared his love and received the confession of my love in return. But it was not until we met in Brussels that I placed myself entirely in his power. He wrote me to meet him there, and go on with him to Paris to buy my *trousseau*, as he had arranged matters so as to be able to marry me very soon, and that telegram, which you all supposed to come from my relatives, was sent by him to announce his arrival at the *rendezvous* agreed upon. After I had

joined him he made no secret of his wishes and designs, and although I resisted for a time, he finally succeeded, partly by persuasion, partly by force, in accomplishing my ruin. I wonder now that I did not try harder to protect my innocence, but I was alone with him in a strange hotel, and even if I had called for help he might have prevented my rescue. I felt that I was hopelessly compromised, and besides, *I loved him*, and the belief that I was soon to be his wife blinded me to the enormity of his guilt, and to the fatal consequences of my own weakness.

"The next day, after leaving me alone for several hours, he suddenly appeared and announced with much agitation that he had just received a telegram from London summoning him to return without delay to attend to some important business concerning his affairs in America. As he would not be absent more than two days he preferred to have me stay where I was until his return, when we would go on to Paris together. So I remained in Brussels alone, tormented by self-reproach, and feeling a dim presentiment of coming disaster. The third day I received a letter from him saying that his business affairs in America had gone wrong, and that our marriage must be put off indefinitely. He advised me to return here and go on with my studies as though nothing had happened; he would join me as soon as his work in England would permit.

"During all the long weeks of his continued absence he never wrote to me. After he returned he informed me in the most heartless manner that our intimacy must cease, so long as we remained together in this house, and until he should see fit to resume our former relations, and since he started for Riga he has never written a word, nor sent me a message in his letters to other friends. I do not think I could have kept my engagement a secret from you if he had not warned me especially against your influence. He said you had a prejudice against him and would certainly make mischief between us. Afterwards, when I realised how I had been betrayed, I could not tell you—and live!

"The temptation to kill myself has grown into a fixed determination through a fact which I have only lately discovered and

which proves beyond a doubt the hopelessness of my desertion. *Hattie is not his niece, nor any relation of his at all; but she has been under his protection ever since she has been abroad.*

"Judging from his conduct towards me, there is only one conclusion to be drawn from this fact, and I daresay that we two are not his only victims.

"Farewell, dear friend! Think of me as charitably as your kind heart will allow.

"Perhaps there is some other world where purity of intention will weigh more effectually against mistaken action!

"Your wretched

"LOUISA."

Something happened this morning which, in connection with poor Louisa's shocking communication, seems like "a special Providence."

I went out on an errand to a shop in the village, and on my way back I passed a ragman's cart which was drawn up near the sidewalk to receive another pile of rubbish. A piece of white paper, covered with writing, was fluttering in the wind on the top of the cart, and, without thinking, I drew it out of the dirt. It was part of a letter, torn and stained, as though it had lain a long time on the ground. It was dated four years back, but the writing looked strangely familiar, and I began to pay attention to the contents. It was evidently written by a man to a woman, and the language implied the closest union, the most unreserved intimacy. Some of it was indecent; I felt ashamed to be reading such allusions. The letter ended with business directions which proved it to have been addressed to Hattie, and the signature—"Your devoted LANKY," made it equally certain that the writer was Carter Montague, "Lanky" being a pet name by which Hattie occasionally called him when in a playful mood.

I hurried home and showed the letter to Mrs. Lester.

"Now I will tell you something more," she said. "While I was with Honora in Venice, she told me about the love affair

which I had dimly guessed at before. Only think of it! She was engaged five years to Mr. Montague and although she was often dissatisfied with his conduct and wished to break the engagement, he would never consent, and always found means to convince her of his faithfulness. She expected to meet him here last fall, and to have a final explanation face to face. And when she found that he had gone away just before her arrival, and when she met Hattie, and saw how often the absent uncle wrote to his niece, while *she*, his betrothed, did not hear from him for weeks, and even months at a time, her patience gave way, and she wrote him a short, cold letter of dismissal. He replied with the usual protests; but she remained firm, and did not even answer his letter. But when she heard me speak so highly of him, during my recent visit, she began to think that she had been hasty in her judgment of his character, and as she has great confidence in my opinions, she told me the whole story, and begged me to advise her what to do. Fortunately, I counselled patience and delay. I wanted to see you again and find out more about the numerous love affairs in which he has been concerned, before making up my mind as to whether my dear Honora could venture to trust her future in his care. So she never wrote to him again. Since she heard of his death, she has been disposed to blame herself for cruelty. I shall write to her immediately, and let her know of our discoveries, and congratulate her on her escape from all association with such a wretch. Honora is too high-minded to cherish any regret for a dishonourable man; with her, to cease to respect is to cease to love."

I am astonished when I contemplate the revulsion of feeling which has taken place in my mind with regard to Mr. Montague. I detest his memory; I consider it a mercy that his career was cut short before he could do any more harm; I am only sorry that he died in the belief of our continued ignorance of his true character, and wherever he may be, I hope he knows how completely we have found him out. His game is very easy of com-

prehension, now that we have the clue. It was to make love to every girl who attracted him, engage himself to her for the sake of the familiarities which are allowed in such a situation, and then seduce her if he could, and if not, desert her.

Mademoiselle Patras was too well protected by her own modesty and the watchfulness of her parents ; so he soon tired of her. Honora Fanshawe could never be approached by dishonourable overtures, and he probably held on to the engagement in a mere "dog-in-the-manger" spirit, to keep other suitors away. Hattie, young and simple, was easily led astray, and Louisa's fatal reserve towards friends of her own sex left her unprotected before the sly advances of so accomplished a seducer. The unknown English lady, the German girl in Schneckenberg, Fräulein Rehfeld, what of them? Probably none of these had passed beyond the limits of a sentimental friendship, and have therefore no irremediable disgrace to repent of. I shall tell Fräulein Rehfeld's mother that Mr. Montague is dead, and that I have changed my opinion in regard to his character ; probably a knowledge of his general unworthiness will be her daughter's surest cure.

As for his elaborate story about the Lutheran pastor's wife, I do not believe a word of it ! She may have been ready to act the part of Potiphar's wife, but I am sure he was not a Joseph ! It was very cunning of him to talk to me in that way, and it showed his deep knowledge of human nature, for when a sincere mind is led to take a certain bias, it is not easily turned ; it is more likely to shape surrounding obstacles to suit its own direction. My belief in that plausible narrative did more than anything else to make Mr. Montague a hero in my eyes, and blind me to what might otherwise have aroused suspicions of his integrity.

We often wonder how shrewd, sensible people can be deceived by thimble-riggers and other adepts at "confidence" games. It is because these sharpers work upon natural principles. They start a certain idea in the mind of their victim, and the mind carries that idea out to its logical conclusion, uninfluenced by the warnings of extraneous circumstances.

I have spoken of all those other persons because they have

suffered most from Mr. Montague's treachery. But I am indignant when I remember how he treated me—how he deceived me in every way and shape, and made use of my regard to cover his base purposes towards those whom I esteemed as my friends. I am not proud, but I *do* consider myself rather too good to serve as "mother of the maids" to Mr. Montague's harem!

I am angry, too, when I think of the care and sentiment I wasted on Hattie, while she, no doubt, was laughing in her sleeve at my simplicity, and chuckling with her lover at the ease with which they were able to manage us all! She has not answered my letter, and I shall never write to her again, unless she addresses me first, in which case I shall let her know that the truth has come out, in spite of her deceitfulness, and *that* will of course end our correspondence.

Every tragedy, excepting death, has its comic side, and notwithstanding our mournful feelings over Louisa's untimely end, and our indignation over the conduct of Mr. Montague and Hattie, Mrs. Lester and I often indulge in a hearty laugh, as we recapitulate the many scenes and events which interested us so deeply a little while ago, and which, in the light of recent revelations, appear farcical in a high degree.

She is puzzled to know why Mr. Montague warned Louisa against her, and why he supposed that she had a prejudice against him. She is inclined to think that he took fright at her reserve on first being introduced, or perhaps dimly remembered having seen her among the crowd at Homburg.

She says she shall hereafter trust more than ever to her intuitions with regard to strangers; what she *feels in her bones* will be attended to and acted upon without hesitation.

I told her the other day about Harry Barnard's suspicion of Hattie's being a mother. She said if it was true it would explain the girl's anxiety over the warning she had given her about the danger of losing her voice, in case of her marrying and having a family.

"And in any case," she continued, "she is having her punish-

ment ; for there is no doubt that she would sing better if she were as innocent as we used to suppose her. That endless letter-writing, from which you tried in vain to wean her, was the worst occupation she could have had, and then think of the mental worry which the consciousness of her secret must have created, and the jealousy which she must often have felt and was obliged to conceal so carefully !

“ Do you remember asking me why I looked so intently at Hattie one afternoon ? I was ashamed of my suspicions then, but now I know that they were well-founded. I was thinking that she did not look like a young girl—like *a virgin*, to speak plainly, and I felt as though I ought to go down on my knees and ask her pardon for my involuntary doubts of her chastity ! You see, it was *my bones* again ! And to think how we used to excuse the lack of expression in her singing on the ground of her lack of experience in emotional feeling ! ”

No one but ourselves has any idea of the true state of things. Mr. Parkhurst always disliked Mr. Montague, but I do not believe that he suspected him of the wickedness of which he was really guilty. The rest of the household speak of him with regretful respect, and we say nothing to alter the prevailing estimate of his character.

What good would it do ? And to expose him would be to betray Louisa.

We are thankful that her letter did not come to light until after the official researches were ended ; as it was, not a word, not a scrap, gave testimony to the fact of her suicide, and its cause.

Mrs. Lester and I have found that we cannot enjoy this place any longer, on account of its melancholy associations, and we have decided to go away.

She will rejoin Honora at Venice, and I am going to Nuremberg. Perhaps, in the contemplation of those old stone relics of the past, I shall be able to lose, in some degree, the mournful impression of recent events.

FIVE YEARS LATER.

After long wandering I am once more in the old place, or rather, near it ; for Pension Irgendwo no longer exists, and I am staying at Frau Wartheim's elegant Family Hotel in Schneckenberg.

I thought when I went away that I should never want to come into this region again ; but time has softened the horrors of past associations, and I am glad to see the familiar places and hear of former acquaintances.

On my arrival yesterday morning at the Schneckenberg station, I started at once to walk to Seedorf. How natural it all seemed ! I met the same market waggons loaded with flowers and vegetables ; the same fishermen pushing their barrows full of fresh fish ; and in the village the same children, or others like them, hurrying along to school, while familiar faces looked out from shop doors and cottage windows. I saw the white cross glittering in the sunshine on poor Louisa's grave as I passed the church, and soon the lake was in sight, and a crowd of memories connected with that tiny sheet of water came rushing through my mind—my hours of solitary musing under the pine trees on the shore ; young Wartheim stealing up from his boat to cut off Miss Reynold's golden curls ; Jessie Baxter urging Count Urwald to take her out rowing ; Signor Morello sailing with Robina ; Louisa Burton skating so gaily with Mr. Montague over the very spot where she was to find a watery grave. Alas ! for her, "*l'amour*" was indeed "*la mort* !"

Everything looked like the old times until I came to Pension Irgendwo, and then I stopped, astonished at the change !

The hospitable iron gate had disappeared ; a high wall shut off all view of the house from the road, and I could see nothing of the garden excepting the top of the plantain tree. The only visible entrance was a narrow door in the wall, near the house, and I was about to ring the bell, when a woman passed by, and I asked her what had happened to work such alterations on the

premises. She said that the house was no longer a Pension, it was now a convent, belonging to one of the religious institutions in Schneckenberg, and used as a Retreat for aged and invalid nuns of the Order. She told me of the removal of the family to Schneckenberg, and after I had visited Louisa's grave I returned to the city and sought the friendly shelter of Pension Wartheim.

There was much for Frau Wartheim to tell, and for me to hear, and I was able to supplement her information with later news received from several of her former guests.

Of the company I met on first taking up my abode in her house, many have never sent any sign of remembrance; but Madame Noffsky was recently seen in Schneckenberg, accompanied by her daughter, which fact seems to prove that she has not allowed passion to triumph over reason and duty. I am very glad of this bit of news.

Signor Morello married his cousin, and is living in apparent contentment, husband of a beautiful wife, father of several children, and proprietor of a magnificent domain. But he told Frau Wartheim, when she saw him two years ago, that he never could forget Robina.

I had a similar story to tell, as Robina has written to me often. She is mistress of an elegant establishment, and belongs to one of the most brilliant circles of fashionable society in New York; her husband is very indulgent and she has three pretty children. She is too loyal to allude to her feeling for Morello; but from the very fact of her frequently turning aside from the work and pleasure of her busy life to write long letters to so insignificant a person as myself, I know that when she went away from us that sunny summer morning she left the romance of her life behind her. Mr. Parkhurst bade farewell to the Pension soon after we did, and has been travelling ever since. He sends a postal card occasionally to inform Frau Wartheim of his whereabouts.

Eudora Patras is married to a man of her own nation, occupying a high position under the Government. I duly informed her parents of Mr. Montague's death, and her marriage took place the same year. Fräulein Rehfeld is still on the stage, a successful

actress, and highly esteemed. I shall never know the extent of her intimacy with Mr. Montague; but I infer from her continued activity and increasing fame, that she has, in some degree, recovered from the melancholy which was a source of such great anxiety to her friends.

Nobody seems to know what is become of Miss Dillard; though Frau Warheim says there was once a rumour of her having been engaged at Pesth, and later of her having gone to Australia. She is not yet a celebrity, or we should hear more about her.

Miss Cavendish is still in England, and writes to me occasionally. According to promise I gave her a short history of Jessie Baxter's affair with the prince, and now I must inform her of the end of that story.

Jessie was in very delicate health for some time after my departure, the effect, no doubt, of the constant excitement of feeling in which she had been living, and which reached so alarming a crisis on the evening of my last visit. After staying in this region all summer, Mrs. Baxter seemed to become convinced that the prince meant nothing beyond his own amusement in his attentions to her daughter, and so she suddenly packed up her things and the two went off to Paris, where I believe they are still living.

The prince is here. Frau Warheim says that the Baxters had not been gone a month before he was pursuing another pretty American girl, and denying up and down his reputed engagement to Jessie Baxter.

I hear from Mrs. Lester frequently. She spends most of the time with Honora and her aunt, and I am to join them by-and-bye in Rome.

One of my first inquiries was about Nina Romanska. Her father is dead, and she is living with her blind and helpless mother in the same retirement as formerly, that portion of the old house having been cut off by the convent wall, and being approached at present by an entrance from the lane. The owners of the property, recognising Mademoiselle Romanska's devoted piety and

the difficulty of removing her invalid mother, allowed her to keep possession of the apartment at a nominal rent, and there she lives, and will probably live all her days, unless her mother dies before her, in which case she will enter as a permanent inmate the cloister to which she can at present penetrate no further than the parlour grating, or the outer court of the chapel.

I went out to Seedorf this morning to call on the Romanskas. The old countess received me with all her former elegance of manner, and Mademoiselle Nina seemed really glad to see me. We talked over old times, and she inquired with interest after absent acquaintances. But she acknowledged that she preferred the present quiet of the neighbouring convent to the former busy life of the Pension. She seems to have a true "vocation" for a nun's self-sacrifice, and yet this passiveness is only the result of her daily renunciations. Gaiety and warmth and tenderness are in her nature, I am sure; but the qualities which would have made her adored in social life were withered in the bud; they will never know flower and fruitage. She is growing old. I was struck by the changes which five years have wrought. There is many a thread of silver in her dark hair, and she smiles with constraint to hide the defects in her once perfect teeth. I used to dream that a happy future might be in store for her, and so there must be somewhere, but not here. Sweet lily of the valley, fair fading rose, for her this world has nothing more to offer!

My last visit in the neighbourhood was to St. Florian's Chapel. I knew that from the top of the hill I could obtain a glimpse of the once familiar garden.

I saw the windows of my room and the balcony below, where Robina used to stand in the moonlight, and the plantain tree, beneath whose shadow she took her last farewell of Morello.

Oh, if that old house could speak, what revelations would it make to disturb the holy calm of its present occupants! How-

ever, the nuns are probably haunted often enough by ghosts of their own raising !

As I sat on the chapel steps alone, I reviewed the past with many a query as to what it all meant, and whether the final issue would be good or evil. What happened here can never be forgotten, even by me, how much less then by the principal actors in those decisive events !

So far as I am concerned, I think I have learned one lesson which will last me my lifetime, and that is, to recognise human nature as a vast whole, irrespective of national or local characteristics. Heretofore I have been too intensely American in my feelings and opinions. I have felt extremely critical towards the people of other nations, especially English people ; though the English themselves were to blame for my captiousness, for before I crossed the ocean I adored "our old home" and everything and everybody in it.

But I see now that I must become more cosmopolitan in my feelings and judgments. I confess that I have never met among English girls so lawless a specimen as Jessie Baxter, and although there may be men as unprincipled as Carter Montague in England, still I cannot deny that Carter Montague was an American.

Henceforth I am ready to acknowledge that like causes produce like effects everywhere.

North and South, East and West, in the Old World and in the New, people are all the while erring and repenting, sinning and suffering, and life to each individual grows more pathetic as the years go on.

I know that I shall be sadder all my days for my experience at
PENSION IRGENDWO.

THE END.

